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THE MONTH

OCTOBER 1952

**THE VENERABLE MARY
OF THE INCARNATION**

EDWARD SACKVILLE-WEST

**TWO FACETS OF THE
NEW ENGLAND MIND**

Emerson and Brownson

RUSSELL KIRK

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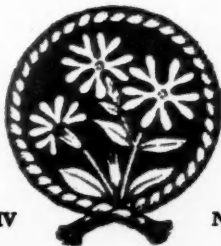
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THE MONTH

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OCTOBER 1952

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THE VENERABLE MARY OF THE INCARNATION

By

EDWARD SACKVILLE-WEST

FEW OF THE GREAT SAINTS have been entirely amiable. St. Francis of Assisi certainly, probably St. Vincent of Paul, perhaps St. Thomas Aquinas, could not be denied the quality of complete lovability; but St. Gregory? St. Basil? St. Jerome? St. Catherine of Siena? I note these names as they occur to me: to attempt an exhaustive list would be a waste of time, and no doubt in so great an army there are many exceptions. It would nevertheless seem that, more often than not, the exigencies of sainthood—or rather, perhaps, the circumstances against which any particular man or woman has had to contend, in order to achieve that all but unscalable peak—have made for a grimness, an obduracy, a certain disregard for the feelings, and above all the capacities, of other people, that leave an impression not wholly agreeable.

My choice of the Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation as the subject of an essay in this series, was governed by the above considerations, as well as by a temperamental admiration for *practical* persons. Many saints, some of them great contemplatives, have been eminently versed in worldly affairs; but few that I have read of have succeeded in so combining the roles of Martha and Mary that it is impossible to imagine them in one without the other. Yet this was Mother Mary's lifelong achievement, as we are privileged to study it in the four fat volumes of her "narratives" and letters, in the impressive but stodgy *Life* by her famous son, Dom Claude Martin, and in the perspicacious but sometimes coy pages devoted to her by the Abbé Bremond in his *History of Religious Feeling in France*.

Marie Guyard was born in 1599, the daughter of a silk merchant at Tours, whose wife, *née* Michelet, had pretensions to noble

ancestry through the family of Babou de la Bourdaisière. As a child Marie showed her religious disposition by the extreme pleasure she took in listening to sermons—an unusual taste for a child, even in those days. At seven years' old she had a dream in which the Saviour came towards her saying, "Will you be mine?" Although on this occasion she saw Christ Himself, it was not His person which she ever afterwards remembered, but *only His words*. The point is worth noting, because it sets the pattern of all Marie's subsequent mystical experiences. These dispensed, to an extraordinary degree, with visual images, which, even where they occurred in the preliminary stages, quickly gave way to purely intellectual concepts.

In 1617 Marie became the wife of another silk merchant—this time a more prosperous one than her father—Claude-Joseph Martin, by whom she had one child, a son, Claude, who was later to become at once the torment and the delight of her life.

The year 1620 was marked by the death of Marie's husband and by the second of her mystical experiences, which took place on the vigil of the Incarnation. I will give this in her own words, as quoted by Bremond:

One day, when I was going about my affairs, for which I had asked God's special attention. . . . I was walking along when suddenly I was pulled up short, both in mind and body, and all thought of the business in hand was taken from me. In one moment, the eyes of my soul were opened, and all the errors, sins and imperfections of which I had been guilty since I was born were passed in review, in particular and in general, more clearly and with more absolute a certainty than human ingenuity could devise. At the same moment I saw myself plunged in a sea of blood, and my soul was convinced that the blood was that of the Son of God, and that the shedding was caused by the sins which I had been shown. . . . Had I not been supported by the hand of God, I think I should have died of fright, so horrible did those sins appear to me, however small they might be. . . . To realize that one is personally responsible, and that, even if one had been the only sinner on earth, the Son of God would have done what he did for all of us—it is this which shrivels and overwhelms the soul.

It is clear from her first sentence that Marie is here relating, not a vision but a "rapture"—the special kind of experience the most extreme form of which is levitation, and which is described

by St. Teresa as "a shock, quick and sharp, before you can collect your thoughts, or help yourself in any way." In Marie's case the shock was painful in the extreme; but the agonizing consciousness of sin—the realization that because of our sins Christ remains nailed to the Cross until the end of the world, "even if one had been the only sinner on earth"—this excruciating sense of absolute responsibility was accompanied by the consoling presence of love.

The chronicles of sainthood make it abundantly clear that, when He wishes to visit someone with an illumination, God is apt to choose a moment when that person is absorbed in mundane affairs. "One day, when I was going about my business"—in the case of Marie Martin the phrase is too mild for the facts. Her husband had died leaving his affairs in a very complicated state. In settling these, which she did with great address, Marie discovered shrewd business capabilities, and within a year she was managing a large warehouse belonging to her brother-in-law, with whom she had gone to live. The warehouse was at the same time a stable in which fifty or sixty horses were kept; here Marie worked all day, and sometimes until midnight, surrounded by dockers, carters and ostlers, driving bargains with hard-bitten merchants, keeping accounts—and seeing to it that the horses were fed and watered. At the same time, she says, she was obliged to occupy herself with her brother-in-law's other interests (of which there were many), whenever he and his wife were out of town. In fact, it is clear that this man abused his sister-in-law's kindness outrageously, and it was perhaps a guilty conscience which led him in later years to adopt a harsh attitude towards her.

Such, ostensibly, was Marie Martin's life for nearly ten years, during which her family made strenuous efforts to induce her to remarry. She seems to have entertained the idea—perhaps for the sake of little Claude, a dreamy child who was passionately attached to his mother and bewildered by the noise and bustle of the warehouse. But already the sense of her future vocation had taken hold on her and she regretted the temptation, to the extent even of dressing badly on purpose to make herself unattractive. For at no time during these busy years was she without the continual sense of God's presence, weaving the invisibly fine but tough web that, once complete, would never let her go.

At the same time, though with one half of her nature she longed to give herself up entirely to a life of contemplation, the other half forbade her at present to relinquish the life of the warehouse. For there are some characters who "think" most fruitfully when the surface of their minds is occupied by other matters. It will often happen, for instance, to a novelist that some idea—a scrap of dialogue, it may be, or a scene, or a whole train of events—slips into his mind *underneath* the main object of his thoughts. He notes its presence, as it were, out of the corner of his eye, but does not immediately bring it out into the light in order to deal with it. Realizing its probable fragility, in its present condition, he prefers to leave it where it is, to mature.

And so, I think, it may be with certain mystics of the type of Marie Martin: the crucial steps in their spiritual progress are taken at moments when they are living simultaneously at two very dissimilar levels. Marie's confessor, Dom Raymond de St. Bernard, seems to have recognized this, for at a very early stage he "forbade [her] to meditate, but [advised her], as far as prayer went, to yield herself entirely to the guidance of the Holy Spirit." A shrewd piece of advice, no doubt; but, although Marie remained devotedly submissive to Dom Raymond, long after she had left France for ever, the line he gradually came to adopt with his penitent strikes me as exaggerated, for it consisted in making her tremendous scenes, in which he scolded and abused her up hill and down dale. Perhaps he thought her practical abilities were a source of pride to her; in any case Marie accepted these factitious humiliations with great meekness, and only the equanimity of her replies to his thundering letters make one guess that she sometimes thought him rather funny.

In the meantime she was favoured by two further moments of illumination—one in 1627, the second two years later. Her accounts of these are explicit; they are unsatisfactory only in the sense that all such explanations are unsatisfactory—because of the insufficiency of language to render in terms of *process* what in such moments is an *instantaneous* grasping of transcendent truth—in this case the mode of the Blessed Trinity.

This came to me as a single impression, which kept me quite still on my knees, so that I perceived *in an instant* what cannot be told or written save as a *succession* of ideas. In that moment I was in a state

of close attachment to the sacred mysteries of the Incarnate Word. . . . In the attachment of which I speak I forgot everything, so absorbed was I in the divine mystery, all the faculties of my spirit suffering a complete arrest [in] a perception of the most Blessed Trinity, but without visual or any other sensuous form. I will not say it was a light, for that again would be a sensual image. I prefer the word *impression*, although that still seems too material; but I can express it in no other way, for the event was too purely spiritual to be described in words. My soul resided in truth, and instantaneously comprehended (again the word will not really do) the divine operation.

The second of these illuminations brought Marie once again into direct contact with the Son. Here the expressions she uses remind us forcibly of the poetic images of St. John of the Cross.

While I was as it were engulfed in the presence of that most adorable Majesty, the sacred person of the Divine Word suddenly made me understand that he was indeed the Husband of the faithful soul. I understood this truth, and the knowledge given me of it prepared me to find it happen to myself. In that moment the adorable Being took possession of my soul and, embracing it with ineffable affection, took it for his own and united with it. When I say "embracing" I do not mean it after the manner of human embraces. . . . His touch on me was wholly divine; he entered into me and, by a reciprocal movement, I into him, so that, being no longer myself, I was all his by the most intimate bond of union, and being in some manner lost to myself I became transformed into him through that loss. Nevertheless, from time to time I returned to myself and perceived the eternal Father, and the Holy Spirit, and then again the unity of the three.

It must be emphasized again at this point that Mme. Martin was before all things a practical woman, and that, if God chose to enlighten her in certain ways, her faculty of literary expression remained more limited than those of many other mystics. Nevertheless, if we compare the statements she made about her spiritual experiences at various stages of her life, it is noteworthy that—contrary to what we might expect of a woman—her "visions" did not consist of images, or, if such were present at an early stage, they were quickly converted into concepts. She insists again and again on the simultaneity, or timelessness (the word

she actually uses is *suspension*), with which the various units of the truth were presented to her; adding that the Will (by which I take her to mean the faculty of choice) was suspended along with the rational process. On such occasions the intellect is literally *enraptured*, and conceives the whole of a complex truth rather as a person's face may give another a complete insight into his character at a single glance.

On emerging from the second of these experiences Marie regained her tranquillity once and for all. In future her union with God was unaccompanied by transports of any kind. She describes the result as a gain in simplicity—simplicity, we may suppose, of understanding and of communication. Thus the whole process would seem to have been one of clarification, for the web which God had woven to draw her to Himself was now complete. In 1630 Marie Martin entered the Ursuline convent at Tours.

Instead of leading to a quiet haven, this step produced a storm from an unexpected quarter. Her family, enraged at losing someone so useful to them, proceeded to make use of her small son Claude as a means of persuading her to return to the world. This form of blackmail nearly succeeded, for Claude Martin, then a schoolboy of ten, lent himself to it with a will, though for reasons very different from those of his uncle and aunt. He regarded his mother's action as an abandonment of himself; he was not prepared to put up with it, and in his efforts to regain her he showed resource and pertinacity.

He was for ever hanging round the gate of the convent, peering sadly through the grille and asking plaintively for me. At the same time, a certain person [his aunt, one assumes] who had promised me always to look after him, now began to send me messages threatening to desert him.

Mme. Martin's dilemma was a painful one. She was tenderly fond of her only child, but it seems that, diffident and unself-centred in anything that concerned herself, and absorbed as she had long been by her double life, in the warehouse and in communion with God, she had seriously underrated the child's love for her. Now, however, she was left in no doubt at all. To make matters worse, the Ursuline convent was at this time in process of building: walls had gaps in them, doors were as yet unhinged, workmen were for ever passing in and out; and where the

workmen could find a way, Claude could find one even more easily. Nothing would keep him away, and he spent this time out of school hours playing hide-and-seek among the nuns' skirts, ferreting out his mother wherever she might be, in corridor, cloister and refectory, there to confront her with the intense little spectacle of his grief and resentment. Worse still, he would lurk in the chapel during Mass and, when the wicket in the grille was opened, to allow the nuns to communicate, Claude would rush up and hurl his coat, or his cap, or anything he could find on him, through the hole, so that it fell in front of the waiting nuns, and sometimes at the feet of his mother herself.

On one occasion he even collected a band of schoolfellows, who besieged the convent with sticks and stones, while a piping voice rang through the house crying: "Give me back my mother! Give me back my mother!"

All this must have been very trying, especially as Marie was far from secure in her own feelings. Not that she ever had a moment's doubt of her vocation; but, after all, she was a mother and could not feel absolutely certain of her right to abandon her son. Moreover, she dreaded lest the uproar created by Claude might move the Mother Superior to abate the nuisance by dismissing the cause of it.

The dilemma was worthy of Corneille, and although Marie stuck to her decision in spite of all appeals, she never succeeded completely in dispelling the uncertainty in her own heart. The Abbé Bremond declares that, had he been her spiritual director, he would have forbidden her to abandon her son. For my part, I cannot help thinking that the latter's subsequent career is proof enough that her action was approved. Claude Martin is an interesting, somewhat mysterious figure. When it became clear to him that all attempts to force his mother to return to the world were of no avail, he fell into sulks, refused to do his lessons, said "he would never be any good." Bremond concludes that as a boy Claude was "unusual, impulsive, excessive, changeable, of rather weak character," and suggests that Marie was strengthened in her resolve by realizing the difficulty she would have in bringing up a son so unlike herself. We do not know precisely what became of him during the silence that falls over the story of mother and son between 1630 and 1639; but there seems no reason to doubt that his mother's example had a powerful effect on the boy's

development. In early manhood he suffered, not surprisingly, from the onslaught of sensual desires. These he combated, apparently with success, by throwing himself naked into clumps of nettles, and even into a gooseberry bush. Notwithstanding these macerations, the Jesuits, to whom he presented himself as a postulant, refused to take him on—without giving any reason. Undaunted, he applied to the General of the Maurist Congregation, Dom Grégoire Tarris, who agreed to receive him. Claude entered on his novitiate in 1641. By this time, however, Mother Mary of the Incarnation (as Marie Martin had become) had left France for Quebec, from which she was never to return.

The original missionaries to Canada had been laymen. These were followed, in 1611, by a number of Jesuit Fathers. Despite determined opposition from the English, they succeeded in establishing themselves by 1632. Their field of evangelization consisted of the neighbouring Redskin tribes, the Hurons and the Iroquois. The Hurons were relatively friendly; the Iroquois were not—more out of enmity to the Hurons than to Christianity. Many of the Jesuits were tortured or burnt. Attacked by the Indians, frowned upon by the English, the missionaries found themselves in a very precarious situation.

At this point Mother Mary decided to come to the rescue. Her confessor, Dom Raymond, had himself had some idea of taking a hand; but he was clearly not the man for the job, whereas Mother Mary no less clearly was. In 1639 she made up her mind to leave for Canada—but without saying anything to Claude beforehand. When her family discovered her intentions, they threatened to revoke the settlement they had made in the boy's favour. The threat made no impression at all: Mother Mary was used by this time to taking difficult decisions. Summoning all her long experience as a business woman, she set about finding and equipping a ship, recruiting nuns to accompany her, and overcoming opposition from various quarters. At length all was ready and, joined by the intrepid Mme. de la Peltrie, Mother Mary and her small company set sail.

The voyage, which took all of three months, could scarcely have been more disagreeable. There were violent thunder storms, a gale blew them far north of their course, and the ship narrowly escaped foundering on an iceberg. Mother Mary, however, remained undismayed, and indeed she was in her element. Not

for nothing had she kept her end up for years in the hard-boiled world of the warehouse, seeing that the traders did not cheat her brother-in-law, weighing the merchandise, sitting up late over accounts, and looking after all those horses. Nearly ten years of conventual life had done nothing to blunt the edge of her shrewdness and her tranquil courage. And when at last she had established her little community in the convent at Quebec, she discovered that her natural ambience had followed her there. According to Abbot Chapman of Downside, "God always gives breathing spaces"; in Mother Mary's career the later years of her life at Tours may perhaps be viewed in that light, although misgivings about Claude never ceased to disturb her peace of mind. But, once arrived in Canada, she had little further respite until her death, thirty-two years later.

For herself she had no regrets; indeed, she welcomed having always too much to do.

We feel our way forwards [she wrote] in darkness; and although we seek the advice of intelligent and well-informed people, things do not often turn out as we expect. Still, on we go, and even when we think we have fallen down a cliff, we find ourselves on our feet after all. . . . When the news gets about that the Iroquois have been up to mischief again, everybody at once begins talking about going back to France; but then things continue just as before—people marry, they build, families increase, land is put under plough, there is talk of staying on for good. . . . We ourselves are tilling as much land as we can manage. . . . We have four oxen and six cows. . . . That is how we live, otherwise neither we nor anyone else could subsist, however much help we were to get from France.

Food was scarce, the climate frightful; in 1650 the convent was burnt to the ground (it was rebuilt within the year). The Indians gave constant trouble; but Mother Mary was not in the least afraid of them—in fact seems to have preferred them to the Governor of Quebec and even to the Jesuits, who were often "difficult" (one suspects they were a little jealous of her success).

Power—and within her little world she had plenty—failed entirely to corrupt her, for her mystical union with God, though in her letters she wrote of it only in the most conventional terms, preserved her humility. To live a full contemplative life, and yet retain a vivid energy for what has to be done, is possible only to

saints; others lose the contemplative faculty altogether, or, if they keep it, do so at the expense of its quality. Mother Mary of the Incarnation is an example of that rare combination of faculties on the highest plane, and this is no doubt why Bossuet called her the French Teresa of Avila.

Right up to her death in 1672 she continued to correspond, often at enormous length, with old friends in France, with various religious, and above all with her son, by this time a notable scholar who, but for the interference of Louis XIV (he had been listening to intriguers), would eventually have been elected General Superior of the Maurists. These letters display all Mother Mary's qualities—her brisk common sense, her humour, her simple piety, her constant anxiety for others, and (when necessary) what the Abbé Bremond calls her "flexible firmness." In 1646 the Archbishop of Tours wrote asking if she would like to return to France, and offering her his permission to do so. Her reply is characteristic:

No, nothing on earth could get me away from this place, which is my centre and a very heaven to me—unless it were to work for the union of all the French Orders: for so blessed a cause I would do anything, short of losing my soul.

Mother Mary always knew precisely what she wanted—except in a single case, that of her son, Dom Claude Martin. Her affection for him was increased, as the years passed and absence made the heart grow fonder, by admiration for his spiritual and intellectual gifts. The eminent position to which he had attained must, one would think, have set her mind at rest; yet there is an undertone in her letters to him which indicates that, whatever he himself may have come to feel—and his attitude on the subject remained somewhat ambiguous—she never quite forgave herself for deserting him. He was barely twenty when she left France; they never met again in this life; despite all she knew of his subsequent career—despite all the letters that flowed between them—she would have been less than human if she had not been haunted, in those moments of irritation, or discouragement, or mere lassitude, to which even saints are liable, by the memory of the little school-boy clattering along the stone corridors of the convent at Tours, darting in and out of doorways, climbing through gaps in the half-built walls, flinging his cap at her feet just as she was about to

receive Communion, and distressing the nuns with his cry of "Give me back my mother!"

Her work was her justification, she may well have felt. But, although we may be intellectually convinced, in any particular case, that God has forgiven us a transgression—and indeed we *must* be so convinced—to forgive ourselves is often harder. To some such vestige had the formidable ramifications of Pride been reduced in the heart of Mother Mary.

I wish I could form some idea of this remarkable woman's appearance. The only portraits I have seen are purely conventional; that most often reproduced depicts her as an elderly nun with a glum expression on her face and clasping a large crucifix. I think it fairly certain that Mother Mary did not look at all like this. One would dearly like a drawing of her disputing a bill in the warehouse at Tours, or in the convent at Quebec, dealing out clothes to a troupe of Indian children.

Unlike that other Mary of the Incarnation, Mme. Acarie, Marie Guyard still awaits canonization. This, one feels, can be only a question of time.

TWO FACETS OF THE NEW ENGLAND MIND

Emerson and Brownson

By

RUSSELL KIRK

“**D**EMOCRACY, SIMPLE DEMOCRACY, never had a patron among men of letters,” wrote John Adams, in some respects the greatest native of New England, in 1787. “The people have almost always expected to be served gratis, and to be paid for the honour of serving them; and their applause and adorations are bestowed too often on artifice and tricks, on hypocrisy and superstition, on flattery, bribes, and largesses.” Well, somehow every age finds the writers its taste requires, and even before the middle of the nineteenth century, American democracy had begun to generate its eulogists among literary men; presently Whitman was to sing of a democracy with a sincerity and a naïveté seldom manifested before and probably impossible to revive in later generations of disillusion. Not only democracy, but those concomitant doctrines still more hostile to the traditional order—the ideas of infinite material progress, perfectibility, and alteration for novelty’s sake—obtained their literary devotees among the talents of New England. Emerson’s is the greatest name among these literary optimists. Hawthorne, in some sense, was the opposite number to Emerson; but Emerson’s most consistent and inveterate opponent, among New England’s men of letters, was Orestes Brownson, who had worked his way through the mists of Transcendentalism to the rock of orthodoxy, and had become a convert to Catholicism.

Despite the conservative threads in the Yankee tapestry, New England’s intellectual pattern was perplexed by an enduring streak of tinkering. Rather as Cotton Mather could not resist whittling behind the church door, so New England was incessantly tempted

to improve and purify—particularly to improve and purify other people. A Puritanical tendency, this; and prodigiously diluted though the heritage of Puritanism had become in Transcendentalism and Unitarianism, that optimistic meddling-urge remained in full strength. The impulse was responsible in appreciable measure for the outbreak of the Civil War and for the fiasco of Reconstruction. So enduring has been the effect of Yankee censoriousness that the Stowe version of Southern life, for instance, has continued ever since indelibly marked upon the popular mind of the North; and one perceives its bigoted humanitarianism still at work north of Mason and Dixon's Line, ensuring that almost any play which celebrates the depravity of Southerners will reward its producer, that almost any romance which exposes the blackness of Southern whites never will be relegated to the category of publishers' remainders. This external or expansive New England conscience, this moral and literary equivalent of the Free Soil movement, found its expression on the one hand in the implacable anti-slavery and anti-Southern energies of Garrison and Parker and Lowell and Charles Francis Adams and Sumner. On the other hand, it was expressed in the misty optimism, social experimenting, and metaphysical constructions of Emerson, Ripley, Alcott, Margaret Fuller, and the other Transcendentalists and Concord illuminati.

When, as in some of the Transcendentalists and their Unitarian progenitors, the transplanted Germanic idealism which inspired their system seemed to sustain a kind of conservatism, this was by accident, not from the logic of things. Hegel himself was a conservative only from chance and expediency. The whole melioristic, abstract, individualistic tendency of their philosophy was destructive of conservative values. Reliance upon private judgment and personal emotion, contempt for prescription and authority, a social morality alternately and bewilderingly egocentric or all-embracing (the contradiction so frequently encountered in Rousseau)—these qualities of Emerson's thought gratified a popular American craving which ever since has fed upon Emersonian "Self-Reliance" and "Experience" and "Nature" and his other individualistic manifestos. Were it not for this affinity with the American intellectual appetite, Emerson might not be remembered, for his essays are not easy reading—piercing sentences or paragraphs sparking amid incoherence of structure,

the expression of a mind unsystematic as his friend Carlyle's. But Emerson's speculations were so congenial to the American temper that their influence upon American thought has been incalculably great: one even finds passages from Emerson a favourite exercise in typewriting-manuals, and Emerson has stolen into the soul of such conservatives as Irving Babbitt, sometimes exerting there a disharmonious influence.

Emerson appeals to a variety of equalitarian and innovating impulses common among Americans, all of them earlier remarked by Tocqueville: the passion for simplicity of contrivance, the dislike of hierarchy, the impatience with discipline and restraint, the fondness for summary remedies. When he reduces God to the Oversoul, appeals to individual judgment, extols growth, change, and becoming, and praises a freedom unfettered by compromise or parchment, then he reaches an audience vastly larger than the circle of dreamy Transcendentalists. He becomes a prophet of the revolt against authority. Though he is so uncompromisingly individualistic, now and then his attacks on materialism and the "present tenures" of property foreshadow socialism. This is no paradox. True conservatism, conservatism uninfected by Benthamite or Spencerian ideas, rises at the antipodes from individualism. Individualism is social atomism; conservatism is community of spirit. Men cannot exist without proper community, as Aristotle knew; and when they have been denied community of spirit, they turn unreasoningly to community of goods. Despite Emerson's talk of "the eternal One" and the Oversoul, despite his outward rejection of atomism, beneath this veneer lay a philosophical isolation of man from man. Perhaps a kind of instinctive revulsion against his own spiritual individualism drove Emerson toward social collectivism—toward that dour substitute for free harmony, that sodden solacing uniformity, which Tocqueville calls democratic despotism.

Emerson's specific political notions are almost shocking—frightening in the first instance for their perilous naïveté, in the second instance for their easy indifference to uncomfortable facts. Shrugging aside constitutional safeguards, checks and balances, devices to secure freedom, prescriptive authorities, he declares that all we require in government is goodwill. We must found our political systems upon "absolute right," and then we will have nothing to fear. This from a professed admirer of

Montesquieu and Burke! The most optimistic of the *philosophes* was not more puerile in statecraft. Emerson's political ideal is as impractical as Thoreau's, without Thoreau's toughness of fibre to furnish an excuse for proof. Rousseau and Hegel are reduced to absurdity, unwittingly, by their confident New England disciple. And when the question arises of how "absolute right" may be established, Emerson falls into that adulation of the violent hero, the "wise man," which is still more conspicuous in Carlyle and has been one of the most disastrous delusions of the twentieth century. After years of Transcendental humanitarian preaching, Emerson informs the world that Osawatimie Brown is the destined instrument of absolute right: John Brown, that blood-stained old fanatic, the butcher of innocent men in Kansas and at Harper's Ferry, the archetype of the terrorist who has been at work these past hundred years reducing the science of politics to assassination. Brown "made the gallows glorious like the cross." In this tribute to a being at his best moments a monomaniac, at his worst a homicidal horror, one perceives how perilous is the foggy Debatable Land between transcendentalism and nihilism.

"Experience has ever shown, that education, as well as religion, aristocracy, as well as democracy and monarchy, are, singly, totally inadequate to the business of restraining the passions of men, of preserving a steady government, and protecting the lives, liberties, and properties of the people." This admonition of John Adams meant nothing to Emerson. Only the balancing of passion, interest, and power against opposing passion, interest, and power can make a state just and tranquil, said Adams. John Adams believed the existence of sin to be an incontrovertible fact; while Emerson, discarding with the forms of Calvinism the very essence of its creed, never admitted the idea of sin into his system. "But such inveterate and persistent optimism," Charles Eliot Norton remarks of his friend Emerson, "though it may show only its pleasant side in such a character as Emerson's, is dangerous doctrine for a people. It degenerates into fatalistic indifference to moral considerations, and to personal responsibilities; it is at the root of much of the irrational sentimentalism of our American politics."

On his fifty-eighth birthday, Emerson remarked, "I never could give much reality to evil and pain." Now evil and pain are the

tremendous problems of Christian thought; and a man who cannot "give much reality" to these terrible and inexorable facts is an untrustworthy guide for the modern mind. The whole social tendency of Emersonianism has been either to advocate some radical and summary measure, a Solomon's judgment without its saving cunning, or (if this will not suffice) to pretend that the problem does not exist. Few peoples have been more complacent about evil in their midst than have the Americans since the Civil War, and none so anxious to deny the very existence of evil. Twentieth-century America provides the spectacle of a nation tormented by crime, urban vice, political corruption, family decay, and increasing proletarianization; and amid this scene the commanding voice is not a Savonarola's, but the chorus of sociologists and psychologists and neo-positivists in pulpits, proclaiming that sin does not exist and "adjustment" will heal every social cancer. Now Emerson did not invent this ostrich-tendency of the American public, but he was its most powerful apologist. If an evil is geographically remote, or peculiar to a section or class (like slavery), solve it by surgery without anaesthetic; if it is close to home, in one's very heart—why, we must be mistaken.

If a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, a fatuous optimism often is the damnation of expansive minds. As a social optimist ignoring the fact of sin, Emerson was a radical thinker, perhaps the most influential of all American radicals. Believing, like Rousseau, in the supremacy of benevolent instincts, he was hot for discarding all the old ways of society so that the ground might be cleared for the new edifices of emotion. Among the voices that answered him, Orestes Brownson's was the boldest.

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Until Emerson and his circle established the Concord hegemony in American letters, for the most part the literary men of the United States had justified John Adams' dictum by marked conservatism of mind, suspicion of democracy, and love of old ways. Irving and Cooper and Poe participated in this character; and some eminent contemporaries of Emerson, repudiating the works of Transcendentalism, subjected innovation to a criticism which left its mark upon American thought. After Hawthorne, Brownson was the most important among these writers.

The restless mind of Orestes Brownson, a Vermonter, sampled nearly every dissent of Transcendental times, and at length embraced orthodoxy with the fervour of a man who has found sanctuary. Congregationalism, Presbyterianism, Universalism, socialism, atheism, Unitarianism, and revolutionary plotting led by tortuous paths, in 1844, to Catholicism. Brownson had known Brook Farm and New Harmony, but now he became one of a community older than the nations. In the latter half of the twentieth century, more attention may be paid to Brownson than he has received in the past hundred years. His books are very hard to find. Parrington does not mention him in his *Main Currents*; something like a conspiracy of silence has kept his name out of histories of American thought, perhaps because Brownson's attack on Protestantism in its churchly and its social forms does not fit conveniently into the neat categories of conventional intellectual surveys. Yet he is the most interesting example of the progress of Catholicism as a conservative spirit in America, and it now seems possible that within two or three generations, the majority of Church-communicants in the United States—possibly, indeed, the majority of the whole population—will be Catholics. The elaborate and subtle history of Catholicism in North America, not yet satisfactorily written, ought to deal thoroughly with Brownson and his *Democratic Review*.

Burke remarked, more than once, the beneficial influence of Catholicism as a system innately conservative; Tocqueville described its conservative tendency in American life and predicted its growth; in this century, Irving Babbitt wrote that perhaps the Roman Catholic Church (which he did not love) may become the only effective instrument for preserving civilization. Brownson, formerly saturated with every radical speculation and now purged of them all, took up this duty of conservation upon the foundation of religious principle.

"We have heard enough of liberty and the rights of man; it is high time to hear something of the duties of men and the rights of authority." So this bold New England journalist wrote in the *Democratic Review*, in one of the articles later republished in his *Essays and Reviews*. Obedience, submission to God, is the secret of justice in society and tranquillity in life, quite as much as it is indispensable to eternal salvation. To redeem Americans from sectarianism is the task of the intelligent social reformer as well

as the duty of the priest; for free political institutions can be secure only when the people are imbued with religious veneration. Democracy, more than any other form of government, rests upon the postulate of a moral law, ordained by an authority superior to human wisdom. But where in the Protestant system or in Transcendentalism is the moral law defined adequately, or its interpretation facilitated? Is not the "moral law" of Concord a mere idealizing of emotion and personal impulse? Blasphemously, the Transcendentalists confound divine love and human love, and religion sinks into a maudlin sentimentality.

Protestantism descends through three states: first, the subjection of religion to the charge of civil government; second, the rejection of the authority of temporal government, in favour of submitting religion to the control of the faithful; third, individualism, which "leaves religion entirely to the control of the individual, who selects his own creed, or makes a creed to suit himself, devises his own worship and discipline, and submits to no restraints but such as are self-imposed." When this last stage is reached, disintegration of the religious spirit is imminent; for man not being sufficient unto himself, reason unaided cannot sustain faith, and Authority is required to preserve Christianity from degenerating into a congeries of fantastic sects and egotistical professions. Under Protestantism, the sect governs religion, rather than submitting to governance; the congregation bully their ministers and insist upon palatable sermons, flattering to their vanity; Protestantism cannot sustain popular liberty because "it is itself subject to popular control, and must follow in all things the popular will, passion, interest, prejudice, or caprice."

The modern spirit, of which Protestantism is one expression, detests the idea of loyalty upon which the whole hierarchy of this world and the next is founded: "What it hates is not this or that form of government, but *legitimacy*, and it would rebel against democracy as quick as against absolute monarchy, if democracy were asserted on the ground of legitimacy. The modern spirit is in everything the direct denial of the practical reason. . . . It asserts the universal and absolute supremacy of man, and his unrestricted right to subject religion, morals, and politics to his own will, passion, or caprice." This is fatal to democracy, for it stimulates insubordination and disorder, setting everything afloat, and that moral solidarity which makes so

delicate a government as democracy possible is broken. Popular religious feeling, which conceivably may be absent in a monarchy or an aristocracy without ruining the social structure, is indispensable in a democracy.

Goodwill is not enough to safeguard freedom and justice: this delusion leads to the triumph of every demagogue and tyrant, and no amount of transplanted Idealism can compensate for the loss of religious sanctions. Men's passions are held in check only by the punishments of divine wrath, and the tender affections of piety. The sovereignty of God, far from repressing liberty, establishes and guarantees freedom; authority is not the antagonist of liberty, but its vindicator; Catholics, above all others, should be conservatives, although many Americans of the Catholic faith have fallen into the error that the established order is their enemy, they having come from countries where the government was intolerant of their religion. "Majorities may protect themselves; minorities have no protection but in the sacredness and supremacy of law. The law is right as it is; we must study to keep it so; and if we do, we shall always throw our influence on the conservative side, never on the radical side." Brownson proceeds to anticipate the arguments which extreme Protestants and anti-clerical writers are using in the twentieth century against Catholicism, and to refute them. The Church has no desire to meddle in the affairs of the state; it endeavours simply to expound the moral laws which just governments obey.

Constitutions cannot be made, says Brownson, agreeing with De Maistre: they are the product of slow growth, the expression of a nation's historical experience, or they are mere paper. "The generative principle of all political constitutions . . . is Divine Providence, never the deliberate wisdom or will of men." Constitutions must vary as the experience of the people who live under them has varied; and whatever form of government has been long established in a nation, that must be the best permanent framework for the national corporate life. In Europe, monarchy and aristocracy ought to be perpetuated because the whole tenor of existence there is bound up with these institutions. But in the United States, royalty and nobility never existed, as a native development, nor did king and nobles migrate here. The commons alone migrated to America, and therefore our constitution is framed to suit a nation in which the commons are the only

order in the state. Thus republicanism is the best government for America, and the true American conservative will struggle to maintain the Republic in its purity, strictly obeying its laws, cleaving fast to its written Constitution. No human institution is immutable; constitutions must be mended now and then; but the social reformer does not create. He develops, he restores to health, but he knows that he cannot hack a new constitution out of raw humanity.

"Our great danger lies in the radical tendency which has become so wide, deep, and active in the American people." Ceasing to regard anything as sacred or venerable, spurning what is old, injuring what is fixed, setting adrift all religious, domestic, and social institutions, we borrow nothing from the past and ignore the data of experience. We even try to deny that language has exact meaning. The majority of the American people may not approve this tendency, but they are silent before ambitious enthusiasts and competing politicians. We shall not escape from this torrent of change and perilous experiment until we recognize the principle of authority: the authority of God. This cannot be apprehended without the Church. As Protestantism and its fumbling offshoots decay before our eyes, upon the mound of dissent must rise the fortress of orthodox belief, without which human sin and foible know no limits, without which order and justice perish.

Men are little moved by mere reasoning, however clear and convincing it may be [writes Brownson in *The American Republic*—which, though one of the most penetrating treatises on American political theory, is a book known to almost no one]. Routine is more powerful with them than logic. A few are greedy of novelties, and are always for trying experiments; but the great body of the people of all nations have an invincible reptugnance to abandon what they know for what they know not. . . . No reform, no change in the constitution of government or of society, whatever the advantages it may promise, can be successful, if introduced, unless it has its root or germ in the past. Man is never a creator; he can only develop and continue because he is himself a creature, and only a second cause.

This conservatism of the flesh is itself a Providential device, keeping rein upon the lust of ambitious men after innovation.

Providence, in essence, is continuing creation; and an irreligious people, denying the reality of Providence, condemn themselves to stagnation.

The process of Catholic proselytizing has been slower in the United States, perhaps, than Brownson hoped, but it has been steady. What an ascendant Catholicism in America would be like—whether, as Tocqueville hints and Mr. Evelyn Waugh conjectures, it will be a Catholicism much altered and diluted by American materialism and democracy—the next few generations may begin to learn. They will be fortunate if they can resurrect the active intelligence of Orestes Brownson to reconcile orthodoxy with Americanism.

Caleb Weatherbee, the Catholic cripple of Salem, in Santayana's *The Last Puritan*, says movingly:

I live in the future too, thinking of those who will come after us in this teeming America, not—fortunately for them—the heirs of my body, but in some measure, I am sure, the vindicators of my mind. We were always a circumcised people, consecrated to great expectations. Expectations of what? Nobody knows: yet I believe God has revealed to me something of the direction of his providence. I thank him for my deformity, because without it I should probably have been carried headlong—what strength have I of my own?—by the running tide of our prosperity and triviality, and never should have conceived that we in America are not addressed to vanity, to some gorgeous universal domination of our name or manners, but that without knowing it we are addressed to repentance, to a new life of humility and charity.

It is not beyond the realm of possibility that the stern New England current of dissenting piety may reunite with the stream of orthodoxy, as it did in the person of Brownson, and wash American character in the waters of repentance. The shock of Hiroshima and Nagasaki may have ushered in, unknown to almost everyone, that new life of humility and charity; and further national trials, whatever they may inflict upon the structure of society, are likely to assist this transformation of the New England conscience. It is not from Emerson that the American mind can draw strength in her present hour of triumph and bewilderment.

AN ELIZABETHAN ADVENTURER

The Career of Sir Antony Standen—II

By

GEOFFREY ASHE

ON JUNE 13, 1593, after twenty-eight years away from England, Standen arrived at the Bacon chambers in Gray's Inn. A tall, handsome man with a flaxen beard (thus his description in the files of the secret service), he came trailing a cloud of pseudonyms. To his employer Walsingham, now dead, he had been "Pompeo Pellegrini": Walsingham curtly called him "Pompey." To Anthony Bacon, his rescuer, he had introduced himself from his cell in Bordeaux as "Andrew Sandal." Later he had sent letters purporting to be the work of "La Faye." However, on his native soil all these phantasms evaporated, and the elderly gentleman at the gate of the Inn passed for no one but Sir Antony Standen. Strictly speaking, we cannot be certain that he was. Nobody in England had any reliable memories of Sir Antony, and conceivably the person who reported to Bacon was an impostor—a Spanish spy, for example. But the biographer must assume that he really was what he gave himself out to be, and that Sir Antony Standen is one continuous entity.

Bacon, pleased at this acquisition for his private intelligence bureau, hastened to lead the recruit to his patron Essex. The Earl had signed Standen's passport, but was so afraid of the disapproval of William Cecil, now Lord Burghley, that their first interview was furtive. Nevertheless it was cordial. Essex gave Standen a golden chain; Standen promised friendship, and said he hoped for a position at Court in reward for his past services. He was still drawing the pension Elizabeth had been persuaded to grant him, but it did not go far, and if he was to attend Essex as a foreign intelligencer he would have to move in aristocratic

society—which meant wearing costly clothes. On the word of Bacon he had given up his plan to return to Scotland to serve his beloved James. He had come (as he afterwards put it) to “shroud himself in England under a cold shelter.” Surely Bacon would see to it that the shelter grew warmer.

At first everybody who counted received him well. Despite the growing rivalry between Essex and the Cecils, the astute Robert brought him to the Queen, and he kissed the hand that had once knighted him. Elizabeth asked for a manuscript account of his travels. He set to work, but a severe ague, which he blamed on the heavy English meals, confined him to bed. Francis Bacon volunteered to deliver the document, but it seems to have miscarried; anyhow the Queen was displeased. As a matter of fact, Standen had not impressed her too favourably. While grateful for his espionage, and disposed to overlook his youthful rebellion, she thought him excessively pro-Scottish. His preoccupation with the succession, and therefore, by implication, with her own death, did not endear him to her. From August onward Standen passed his days in discomfort, never quite well, and perpetually frustrated. People were kind to him at Court, but they had other concerns—indeed, he complained that he had never seen such plotting and place-seeking anywhere in Europe—and when he tried staying with the Bacons at Twickenham, their mother, a terrifying Puritan dowager, made him unwelcome on the ground that he was seducing her Anthony from the Protestant faith.

Not wishing to appear useless, he still collected whatever information he could. He was bound, however, to be superseded in this capacity, and when the ague recurred Essex advised him to put his health first. On Twelfth Night, 1594, we find him kicking his heels at Hampton Court. The evening's festivities were brilliant: to his old eyes, he wrote, Elizabeth looked as beautiful as he ever remembered her. The entertainment included a play by her troupe of actors. Standen tried to excuse himself by talking about his illness again, but Essex had made him responsible for some German visitors, so he had to watch the performance and the subsequent dancing till the small hours. Probably there were few courtiers available who could speak German. We may infer that Standen could, from his liaison with Barbara Blomberg, who knew no other language.

He went to visit his brothers up the Thames Valley. With all

of them except one he had almost lost touch during his long exile. Antony Junior, however, the comrade of his Scottish adventure, appears to have kept up a correspondence from his farm in Chertsey, and may have acted as go-between when Sir Antony first offered himself as a spy to Walsingham. The younger brother had influential friends. In 1574 some legal fuss which embroiled him with a neighbour had been submitted to the arbitration of the Surrey magistrate Sir William More. More became acquainted with Antony, and a letter of Sir Christopher Hatton mentions the magistrate's high opinion of him. On September 13, 1586, he appeared before the Privy Council on business which the minutes do not record. He was instructed to remain within call, and a few months later the Earl of Leicester wrote to Sir William More demanding that Antony be sent to him for a further interrogation. Just about then the elder brother was beginning to operate his spy network. One Privy Councillor—John Wolley, the Latin Secretary—was More's son-in-law. He, too, came into contact with Antony Junior, and he was closely associated with Walsingham in the handling of foreign correspondence. There is good reason to think that these mysterious interviews in the 1580's arose from Antony's action as intermediary. A report on Turkish affairs, by which the exile presumably tried to recommend himself, turned up some years ago in the library of the Tollemache family. The former seat of this family was Petersham Manor, Chertsey—in the immediate neighbourhood of Antony Junior—and it is unlikely that such a document would have come into their possession by any other route than this obvious one.¹

But, while he nursed his strength at the homes of his rural relatives, Standen was always reverting to the fool's paradise of Court, seeking the post that never seemed to come his way. Here his brother was no help at all. Through a long twilight of disappointment he clung hopefully to Essex, whom he admired,

¹ Sir William More was the landlord of the Blackfriars, and had dealings with Lyly, the Earl of Oxford, the Burbages, and other leading theatrical figures. This is another aspect of the possible Standen-Shakespeare connection, about which I have written a little (*The Month*, April and October, 1951) and could write much more. One can discern in Shakespeare bits of special knowledge, touches of caricature, allusions to Court gossip, choices of theme and even variations of mood, that would make Standen a much more promising pretender to the authorship of the plays than Francis Bacon or the other heretical candidates. Several explanations are open.

though he thought him rather irresolute. As he put it in a letter to Anthony Bacon: "No other fault hath the Earl, but he must continually be pulled by the ear, as a boy that learneth Ut, re, me, fa." In one case at least Essex acted with decision. He uncovered what he alleged to be a plot to murder the Queen, and, despite the scepticism of Robert Cecil, he secured the execution of a Jewish doctor named Lopez. Excitement in London was intense. Standen, as a member of the Earl's intelligence bureau, was kept informed from the beginning, and doubtless approved. Another cause in which he concerned himself was Francis Bacon's prolonged but unsuccessful attempt, with Essex's backing, to get appointed Attorney-General. Standen and Francis were in much the same sort of predicament. A surviving note of Anthony Bacon's shows that he was financing both of them. Impecuniosity, indecision, intrigue: such were the fruits of Elizabethan courtiership.

Essex supported the applications of Standen for office, just as he did those of Francis Bacon. But Burghley, like his son, wanted to curtail the favourite's influence, and since his authority was more solid he was able to do so. In March 1594 Standen managed to waylay him alone in his bedroom at Hampton Court, sitting by the fire. An altercation followed. Burghley said Standen had disrespectfully ignored him, and had broken his word in the matter of the memorial to the Queen. Standen rebutted these accusations, whereupon the Lord Treasurer began to fidget in his chair, and to alter his voice "from a kind of crossing and wayward manner he hath, to a tone of choler." He advised Standen to stick to Essex.

Then he tempested with his own invention and wonted objection of ill and indiscreet demeanour by my discovery at Calais, saying her majesty to be in great choler with him thereabouts. . . . Seeing the sky troubled, I made him a low knee, and bid him well to fare.

(Standen to A. Bacon, March 24, 1594.)

That was almost the end of their relationship. Sir Antony tackled Burghley by letter on a few further occasions, complaining in June 1595 that he had been totally neglected for two years. But he made no progress, and later noted with excusable gusto an incident which led to the Queen's describing Burghley as a "froward old fool."

So Standen was driven back to Essex by his treatment at the

hands of the Earl's opponent. A kindred contributory factor, perhaps, was the hostility between Essex and the Lords Cobham, father and son. During the 1580's the elder Cobham had intercepted several of Standen's most private letters and handed them over to the English Government. Such conduct was not calculated to foster goodwill.

Though Standen gradually subsided as a political figure, he continued to mingle in society. He had, one would say, a flair for acquaintance but not for friendship. He met everybody, yet he was intimate with few or none. His circle included Edmund Dyer, the poet; Lady Rich, the Stella of Sidney's sonnets; the Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's patron; and Sir Roger Williams, the original of Fluellen in *Henry V*. The latter, an effervescent Welsh captain, was possibly quite close to him. Standen wrote thus from Windsor to Anthony Bacon, who was ill:

Sir Roger Williams, Sir Francis Allen, and myself, are most commonly together *de camerada*, where we discourse of all, and where I wish you sometimes to hear Sir Roger in his satirical humour, which maugre your greatest pain would make you heartily to laugh.

His influence, so far as he had any, was directed to two ends. First, he urged a restricted religious toleration. On this subject his position was clear. He favoured complete freedom of Catholic worship as long as it remained non-political. Priests who meddled in State affairs should be prosecuted without mercy; others should be left alone. After the failure of the Armada such a plan might have been workable. There are signs that Essex listened. At any rate he did talk of toleration, and about the time that he did so Burghley was heard to grumble that he had grown too familiar with Sir Antony. The project collapsed when the favourite himself did. Standen's other aim, his unswerving and unforgotten purpose, was the recognition of the title of James VI to the English crown, in accordance with his oath as the Scottish King's first Sassenach subject. Here again it is likely that his efforts achieved something. Through the last years of the century there was an accelerating exchange of letters between Essex House and Holyrood, and, when James was at last able to move south, he smiled on the survivors of the Essex party as men who had paved the way for him. In neither of these matters, religion or the succession, is it now practicable to tell how much weight Standen's counsels ever carried. What is incontestable is that after his

return from abroad Essex's policy did develop along the lines he had advocated.

He still renewed, from time to time, his futile correspondence with Burghley. That wary Polonius still had nothing to say to him, and always rejected his increasingly unrealistic petitions: when, for instance, he asked for the post of Garter King-of-Arms, which was not vacant, on the plea that he expected the current occupant to be dismissed for incompetence. Shortly after the date of this *gauche* appeal, Essex led his celebrated raid on Cadiz. It was the summer of 1596. While the fighting continued ashore, an English ship brought back a packet of letters for the Court. Among them Burghley received one from Standen.

My lord, this I must say, that never prince of England hath received more true glory and reputation than our sovereign in this. . . . We surprised the enemy, whereby this mighty and rich Indian fleet of forty-five sail of good, and some of them of mighty ships, have been consumed to ashes. . . . By this voyage, if no other gain, this only hath much satisfied me, that I have thereby seen and known the men of worth of our nation. Of the earl I will say nothing, but of the lord Thomas, the lord marshal Vere, and Sir Walter Raleigh, I must say, that in no bickering where I have been, I ever saw men more forward and valiant in the matter of combat between our ships, and their ships and galleys, wherein stood all the success of the victory. . . . The thunder of the artillery on both sides began at ten in the morning, and lasted till two and a half in the afternoon; at which time her majesty's ships made the enemy give ground, and the three great ships of war, the Philip, Matthew, and Andrew, ran themselves ashore; and the Philip they fired, the other two we bring you home. Sir Walter Raleigh did, in my judgment, no man better; and his artillery most effect: I never knew the gentleman until this time, and I am sorry for it, for there are in him excellent things besides his valour; and the observation he hath in this voyage used with my lord of Essex, hath made me love him.

His opinion of Raleigh is noteworthy. Hitherto he had accepted the estimate of the hostile Essex, regarding Sir Walter as a disreputable schemer. He came home with a welcome share of the loot (chiefly in the shape of expensive cloth) and much less inclination to hang on to a particular faction.

Meanwhile he was pressing forward some rather cryptic business. On April 23, shortly before the Cadiz expedition sailed, Anthony Bacon had written to Thomas Bodley:

His [Standen's] request is this, that for as much as the expedition of my lord's departure, whom he is to attend in the voyage, gives him no leisure or means to attend the recovery of 200 pounds, which, as he saith, your brother Mr. Hickman knows, that he is to receive two months hence, you would vouchsafe to employ and procure some friend of yours to furnish and advance him the said sum.

There is no clue as to what the payment was for. Standen could never have afforded to lend anybody £200; the money seems to have been due to him for services rendered. After he came back he found it had been withheld, on the pretext of his absence. He applied to the Privy Council, and Hickman—whose Christian name was Richard—received an order to pay it over (December 18, 1596).

This is singular. The language of the letter to Bodley implies that Hickman was not strictly the debtor, but the person responsible for payment. Who was he? I do not know; but among the few eligible Hickmans there is one who catches the eye. He was an agent in London of the Stanleys, Earls of Derby. Theirs was a striking family, of immense wealth and royal antecedents. Sir William Stanley, the famous Hispanophile, was a relation; and Ferdinando, the 5th Earl, had been sounded out by extremists as a potential Catholic candidate for the throne. In 1594 Ferdinando was poisoned. His successor was his brother William, a dabbler in magic, who maintained a fitful contact with the recusant underworld. Both these Earls were prominent in the theatre. Ferdinando was for some time the patron of Shakespeare's company. William relinquished this particular patronage, but *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was probably composed for his wedding to Lady Vere, and in 1599 a spy reported him to be busy "penning comedies" incognito. It is conceivable that Standen was playing some sort of secret game with this interesting nobleman. He had known Sir William Stanley while on the Continent, and he may also have met the future Earl, who travelled through Italy in the 1580's.

Having reaped his windfall, Standen went into a temporary retirement. But the world claimed him at intervals, and despite his advancing years he still behaved like a gallant in more ways than one. The next summer he took ship aboard the *Mere Honour* to attend Essex in a naval raid on the Azores. One of his shipmates was the cultured and frivolous Earl of Rutland, freshly

returned from the grand tour, and no doubt a congenial companion. The expedition, which was crippled by storms and by wrangles among the leaders, can hardly have been enjoyable, and Sir Antony reverted to less violent pursuits. The following February (1598) he was paying court to Mistress Shelley, a rich widow. Essex put in a word for him, but the lady thought him too old, and preferred Sir Thomas Smith.

Essex's influence in general had passed its prime. Within a few months the favourite was sliding toward disaster. His tragedy began in Ireland, where Tyrone suddenly rose and defeated the English garrison. The King of Spain had just died, but Philip III now concentrated all his country's resources for a new enterprise in support of the rebels. Failing prompt counter-measures, it appeared that Ireland must certainly be lost, and Elizabeth ordered her Council to prepare an army. But who was to lead it? Whoever he was, he would be in a position of immense power, since, if he elected to turn against the Queen, she would have no adequate reserves to control him. Essex, fearing the manoeuvres of Raleigh and Cecil, opposed one candidate after another, and himself accepted the command when it was offered him, chiefly because he dared not let it pass to a rival. In April 1599, accompanied by numerous noblemen and strong forces of infantry and cavalry, he crossed St. George's Channel. Among his retinue was the tireless Standen, by this time distinctly apprehensive as to the way the great man was heading. His style appears at its most vivacious in a letter to Edward Reynolds, one of Essex's secretaries (Dublin, April 27, 1599).

We arrived here the thirteenth hereof; only the Earl of Kildare and Captain Charles Mansfelt took ship in a bark of thirteen tons on the Thursday, the night whereof was so tempestuous, as Ned Wyseman will tell you, that the suspicion of the perishing of that wretched bark is so vehement that we hold him lost and fat Mr. Garret an Earl. The ceremonies are past with exceeding magnificence, and now my Lord bends him to the field, as this bearer can tell you, as also he can relate unto you Mr. Cuffe's brain-pan to be wonderfully shaken by the importunity, or rather sauciness, of the indiscreet martial sort, and yet his purse never the heavier, because you know we never had any more than theorick that way. You have so many friends here that my love can but little serve you; yet you may stretch it at your pleasure like an Oxford glove. . . . The service

on St. George's Day passed all the service that I ever saw done to any prince in Christendom. Though all was to her Majesty's honour, yet what malice may hew out of this, you know.

Essex's soldiers took Cahir Castle by a mining operation, and Southampton led the horse in a charge or two, but most of the summer was wasted on fruitless marches. Finally the general patched up an inglorious truce and hurried home, bursting into the royal bedroom with muddy boots to tell his story before anyone else did. His reception was unenthusiastic, and he never resumed command. The abandoned army settled down to an intermittent campaign. For the next three years Standen saw a good deal of Ireland, though it is not clear whether he was there all the time. He used his connections among the officer group to conduct propaganda on behalf of King James. Plainly Elizabeth could not last much longer, and the Stuart succession was still by no means assured. He apparently renewed an old habit of going about with a royal genealogical chart in his pocket (he had got it from the Bishop of Ross) and showing it to everyone he could buttonhole. He was not involved in Essex's mad *coup* of 1601. This, however, does not prove anything as to his whereabouts, since his link with the defeated party as such had long been tenuous, and even though in England he would probably have held aloof.

In 1603 his dream was at last realized. King James of Scotland, the strange object of his adoration, ascended the English throne. Standen sent a memorandum of the Rizzio incident and all his subsequent labours, claiming that the King owed him not merely a debt of gratitude, but the accumulated arrears of the stipend which Mary had once settled on him. After all, had he not been the first Englishman to give his allegiance to the Stuarts? He still vividly remembered the scene:

It liked her royal Majesty some days after the childbirth to cause the knight to be called unto her in her bedchamber, where the infant prince lay asleep, a cross of diamonds fixed on his breast. Upon this cross her Majesty commanded the knight to lay his hand, to whom it was her pleasure herself to give the oath of fidelity to her only son, even then ordaining him his first servant. . . . He rocked his cradle.

Whether James accepted this story is quite uncertain, and he did not pay the arrears of the stipend. Still, he was in a generous

mood, and as it happened there was a job to offer. He had decided to send out special ambassadors to various European Courts, with the task of bearing the official announcement of his accession and policies. The Earl of Rutland was already destined for Denmark. For Venice, however, no one had been appointed, and a fluent speaker of Italian would clearly be appropriate. In a brief interview (one would be glad to know what Sir Antony thought of James, after so many years of distant romanticizing), the knight received the Venetian commission, with dispatches for the Doge and Senate, a portrait of the new King, and a promise of three hundred pounds when he returned.

He started under fair auspices, but his indiscretion misled him into a forest of troubles. While he was in Paris a deputation of Huguenots waited on him, volunteering to supply James with military aid if he would openly declare himself the protector of their religion. English spokesmen had doubtless given them unofficial encouragement. But the Catholic Standen was obviously the wrong person to approach. He relayed the proposal to Henri IV, who exclaimed angrily that if his heretics behaved thus he would wipe them out. The news reached London, and James's ministers felt extreme irritation at this thoughtless exposure of their connection with rebels. One French courtier remarked that Standen was of *un esprit fort leger*, and commented on his habit of cherishing impractical projects. The shrewdness of this observation was soon to be made manifest.

Sir Antony pursued his course, ignorant of the storm brewing behind. The Venetian Senate greeted him with warm hospitality. He told his story, exhibited the King's portrait, and collected complimentary gifts. All might yet have been well. But he told more people about the Huguenot scheme; and he was rash enough to correspond with the Pope, who tried to enlist him as a Vatican representative in England. Queen Anne had become a Catholic. The Pope suggested that efforts should be made to secure a Catholic upbringing for her children, and sent Standen some beads and crucifixes to give her. Sir Antony entrusted his reply to an English traveller, who was a spy of Cecil's and promptly gave him away. More incriminating still were further papal propositions about a bargain for religious toleration in England, accompanied by hints that Standen could expect to be made a Cardinal.

To complete his ruin, Standen, on the way home, wrote letters from Florence and from Paris to Father Persons. The latter of these was a strongly Catholic letter with an ominous air of discontent ("I am weary of this world to see how things frame"), and, needless to say, it was intercepted. Persons composed politic answers in language favourable to James, and proceeded to explain the affair to the Pope. "I am not in the least surprised," he wrote, "that the matter was found out, for the good knight was taken in when he treated that business with your Holiness through the intermediaries he used, that is to say, through men little given to secrecy." With this latter failing, at least, Standen should surely have been familiar.

When the ambassador reappeared, early in 1604, Cecil confronted him with a terrible pile of evidence: dispatches from France, the second letter to Persons, and papers revealing the fatal negotiation with Rome. Seeing how the land lay, he fell on his knees before the omniscient hunchback and confessed all. They put him in the Tower under threat of execution, pending inquiries in Italy. During his imprisonment he wrote a memoir enlarging on the theme of his past loyalty, and sent out frantic appeals to Cecil. He acknowledged that he had erred in "conforming himself so far in this late matter to others' humours and importunities wherein he should have been better advised." He also demanded the money which had been promised him. After six months the King let him go, but said he was a bad character and unfit for public employment. His pension was stopped. And his world disintegrated.

Sir Antony Standen, in his own estimation at any rate, had saved James's life. He had toiled for him and idealized him. He had tried to make him an advantageous marriage. He had pressed his claim to the Crown of England whenever opportunity offered. Well, here was his reward after forty years: to be accused as a traitor, to be locked up, to be reduced to poverty. That was the treatment accorded him by the "fair, illustrious, and wise prince" to whom his Florentine letters had sworn devotion.

After a year of complete darkness, he momentarily emerges again. In 1605 we find him asking leave to go abroad for three years. It seems that he obtained it, on condition that he kept clear of Rome. The condition was immediately flouted. In March 1606 the Venetian ambassador in Rome reported his arrival. Two

years later he was still there, an antiquated and dwindling figure. He continued to talk about his exploit at Holyrood, and his reminiscences found their way into an Italian account of the life of Mary. In May 1608, hearing that Sir John Harington was travelling in the north of Italy, he sent him an invitation. Sir John declined. About the same time, Tyrone came from Ireland, and met the man who had served under his enemies. "Ah, Standen!" said the insurgent, "it is better to be poor in Rome than wealthy and enslaved in England."

Did Standen echo the sentiment? We cannot say, because, after the spring of 1608, he vanishes. There is an allusion to him in a diplomatic dispatch of 1615, but it refers back to Tyrone's visit. Did he return to England? I doubt it: his flagrant disobedience in going to Rome suggests an intention to stay away for ever. Antony Junior died in 1611 and was buried at East Molesey, with an inscription commemorating his escapade at the court of Darnley. But Antony Senior never discoverably died at all—except, maybe, in some obscure Roman burial register. Perhaps he resumed his wanderings and perished among strangers. Or perhaps he retired into a monastery. But in the absence of any contrary evidence, it is fitting to suppose that this erratic, romantic country gentleman, the first of the Jacobites, made somehow or other a truly Jacobite end—in disillusion, obscurity, and exile. *Requiescat. . . .*

NOTE: Most of the easily accessible facts about Standen were listed by Kathleen Lea in the *English Historical Review* for July 1932. Miss Lea's article was little more than a tabulation, and made no serious attempt to interpret Sir Antony or relate him to the world around him. However, it superseded and corrected the only earlier accounts—brief sketches which appeared in *Notes and Queries* in 1909-10 and hopelessly confused the two Antonys.

It is possible to compile a skeleton biography from the Calendars of State Papers, Domestic, Foreign, Scottish, Irish and Venetian. The Hatfield MSS. include various relevant documents, including the Tower memoir; on the whole a disappointing production. Important also are Anthony Bacon's papers at Lambeth, and Thomas Birch's transcripts therefrom. The latter's work, *Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (1754), is still a standard reference book, though it cannot be entirely relied on. Other sources are the Reports of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts; the correspondence of Father Persons; J. Spedding, *The Life of Francis Bacon*; G. B. Harrison, *Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex*; Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham*; and Andrew Lang, *The Mystery of Mary Stuart*. There is doubtless further material in the uncalendared Foreign Papers, and in the French, Spanish and Florentine archives.

I would like to express my thanks to Father Leo Hicks for allowing me to see some transcripts from letters in the Vatican.

THE ART OF BRANGWYN

IT IS A FAR CRY from the Sussex downland village of Ditchling to the Flemish canal-city of Bruges, yet Bruges remains the more apposite place in which to consider the art of Sir Frank Brangwyn, R.A. For Guillaume Francois Brangwyn was born, in 1867, near the old Carthusian convent in the Rue du Vieux Bourg behind the Cathedral of St. Sauveur, and in 1936 the medieval Hotel Arents, part of the Gruthuuse Palace, was adapted as a museum to house many of his paintings.

One may easily lose sight of the fact that Brangwyn is a British subject, the son of a mother who came from a farmhouse near Brecon, and of a father who came from Marlow on the Thames, where Brangwyns have lived since the early fourteenth century, many of them priests, according to the Patent Rolls. Thus it is that a dual strain runs through his work—the Celtic and the Flemish (for there is little or nothing of the English tradition). His symbolism and sensuousness of line belong to the Celt, his robust opulent colour to the Fleming. And it was in the great Flemish tradition that he finally expressed himself, after an apprenticeship with William Morris (broken by his running away to sea) and a brief dalliance with French Impressionism.

Indeed, Sir Frank Brangwyn proudly regards himself as a Fleming, as one of those "simple homely people, in love with good food, the sun and one's fellow-men." The words are his own, and if one is to judge him by them then certainly he is a Fleming. Again, says Brangwyn, the Flemings take art, and painting in particular, for granted, without the art swank and blarney that exist in England. When the Burgomaster and other officials of Bruges came to Ditchling to make a presentation they wandered about the garden and discussed potatoes.

Brangwyn has always been critical of what he calls the anæmia of British painting. He is himself a fine colourist, and in his own work and that of the late James Ensor, both, strangely enough, of English origin, we see that colour is still the mainstay of Flemish painting. In this, too, lies Brangwyn's only affinity with Cézanne, who held that design and colour were the means by which a true painter must express himself, the design being largely obtained through arrangements of colour—"When colour has its richness, form has its fullness." But Brangwyn has not striven to be like anyone else; he is unmistakably, and uniquely, himself.

As early as 1912 D. H. Lawrence, a novelist who held the most exacting canons on art, could write "to copy a Frank Brangwyn is a joy, so refreshing." But Brangwyn had long before that time acquired an enviable reputation as a magnificent designer skilled in composition

and in manipulating large masses, and as a vigorous draughtsman delighting in movement. His canvasses are monumental in scale and are crowded with human figures in which the drama of human emotion and the dignity of labour are nobly interpreted. He painted everything from Mediterranean landscapes to Persian markets, from Billingsgate fish-porters to Aegean pirates, and in all these canvasses there are great powers of romantic evocation. Strangely enough, his ancestral heaths never attracted his brush, and he confesses to not having had the slightest inclination to paint Welsh mountains, though he was early intrigued by the flats and marshlands of Suffolk. His international reputation was largely gained, however, as a decorative designer, having murals on four continents, one of his early series of panels, symbolizing Work, being designed for the Ghent Exhibition of 1913. He acquired more international memberships and decorations than any other living painter, and in 1924 an exhibition of his work, containing 471 examples of his prolific range and variety of mediums, was opened by the Prime Minister at Barbizon House in London.

There is another Brangwyn—the man who worked for the Church, as Matisse, Léger and Rouault among great living painters now do. The amount of work that he has executed in the religious tradition is perhaps little realized, though it may have been expected from the son of an ecclesiastical craftsman whose ability ranged from designing vestments and altar-cloths to designing a church in Bruges, where he also restored the celebrated Chapel of the Holy Blood. One recalls the murals in Christ's Hospital in Sussex and the Stations of the Cross in Campion Hall, Oxford. As a young man Brangwyn was drawn towards the monastic life and at one time wished to be a monk, and it is a great satisfaction for him to have presented two series of religious drawings to monasteries, one to the Abbey of St. André near Bruges, and, quite recently, another to Farnborough Abbey in Hampshire.

In these latter works Brangwyn has obviously been influenced by the Old Masters, though he has made a compromise, and his Christ is neither the orthodox almost ethereal Christ of the Italian Primitives nor the radiant beardless Christ of a Mantegna, nor yet is He the too solid burgher of Rubens—He is of the people. The drawings in the Abbey of St. André (where he also designed stained glass windows) are quite astonishing, for Brangwyn has caught the tortured spirit of the Passion in a manner not seen since the Primitives, depicting the realistic Semitic lineaments of a crowd which G. K. Chesterton likened to "a medieval Flemish mob." Indeed the brute faces directly recall Roger van der Weyden, and there are elements of such caricature as may be found in the Flemish masters of the sixteenth century.

Today Brangwyn lives in a Georgian and earlier house in Ditchling, a village which knew Edward Johnston, the printer, and Eric Gill, the

sculptor (with whom Brangwyn has several points of contact). There are those who regard him as the Hermit of Ditchling, a widower guarded by his devoted housekeeper, Mrs. Peacock, an aloof figure hostile to critics, industrialists, and bohemians, and as trenchant in his denunciation of moderns as Sir Alfred Munnings. Yet the virile exuberant figure in tweeds, with patriarchal bearded head and silvered locks, is kindly, warm-hearted and tolerant. He is tormented by a strong creative instinct still living in what he calls "impotent old age," but he has the courage to go on working. He was recently (at eighty-two) engaged upon a small mural of The Transfiguration, though he disliked working without a model, to which he has always been accustomed. He has had his failures—the rejection of the House of Lords panels, for example—but these are swamped by his achievements, and if he now receives less publicity than other artists it is only because he has shunned the limelight, for he has outlived all his *fin de siècle* contemporaries.

All these are things which distinguish Sir Frank Brangwyn from the artists of the younger generation, and he is perhaps the last British painter to paint in the grand manner, portraying human drama with the understanding of the great masters of the past.

TUDOR EDWARDS

SUBSTITUTES FOR SHAKESPEARE

Reflections on the Stratford Season, 1952

A MIXTURE OF FOLIES BERGÈRE, fashion show, and Christopher Fry. That is how the foreign visitor, innocent of our National Poet, may well have conceived of Shakespeare as the Memorial Theatre presented him this year. Not that the poetry, that which is uniquely Shakespeare, was entirely lost—it emerged, in surroundings drabber than usual, in *Macbeth*—but it cannot be said that the producers strove officiously to keep it alive. Is it that real, unrationed poetry smacks of bad taste in an atmosphere of national austerity? Has the object of our pride changed with our fortunes? Has our economic situation made jokers and *couturiers* of us all?

As You Like It, the play most amenable to the company's talents, has been the great box-office success. Scenery, costumes and the grouping of persons on the stage were undeniably beautiful. Mind you, Shakespeare had been "pepped up": Rosalind (Margaret Leighton) and Celia (Siobhan McKenna) were both quite seductive—except, at times, for Miss Leighton's rather brittle voice—but they

were surely too knowing, they smirked and giggled too often and too naughtily. This Rosalind could never be the instrument of that educative irony which some have detected in the play—though, in any case, the element of satirical appraisal was blurred throughout, for Jaques (played by Michael Hordern, the most notable acting discovery of the season) loomed too large, while Corin—who might be interpreted as a “corrective” to Touchstone’s cleverness—was turned into a quivering old fool, and Silvius and Phebe were not sufficiently “literary” in their bearing to summon up the romantic-pastoral conventions. However, so spectacular a production of this particular play deserves better than to be broken on an academic wheel. Like Miss Leighton’s acting, it was—if a little frivolous—very decorative and never dull.

Coriolanus, it seemed to me, suffered a more serious misinterpretation in that the production was definitely weighted in favour of the hero and the aristocratic party and against the plebeians. For Anthony Quayle was so effective as the most heroic and least tragic of Shakespeare’s tragic heroes and Michael Hordern (a memorable Menenius) won over so much sympathy for him that there was no need to make the citizens appear more despicable than Shakespeare’s words would have them be. Yet it seems hard to reproach these two actors for making so much of their roles. And since the production sped smoothly along and movement on the stage was so excellently planned, it must count as one of the two most successful ventures of the year. Praise is also due to Mary Ellis for her performance in the rather thankless part of Volumnia and to Powys Thomas for his skinny, sinister Sicinius Velutus.

The decision as to which production was the least successful—in plain terms, the most boring—must rest between *The Tempest* and *Macbeth*, in both of which the leading role was taken by Ralph Richardson. I think it can be said that Richardson’s Prospero was at least less of a travesty than Michael Redgrave’s of last year—it had a certain honest dullness about it. And it ought to be said that a young actress, Zena Walker, played an admirable Miranda, youthful and ingenuous without the slightest mawkishness. As ever, Michael Hordern worked hard in the part of Caliban—perhaps, in view of the fact that some of the caste took life so easily, a little too hard—while Margaret Leighton played an energetic, indeed an over-vivacious, Ariel. The masque was a lush, extravagant affair, and here—as elsewhere this year—one reflected painfully on the discrepancy between the technical brilliance of the “back room” and the powers of conviction of some of the leading actors. The effort required to evoke this *grande machine* might well have sapped Prospero’s vitality, one felt. Just as our powers of imagination were strained at the very outset—

by the vision of a dozen young ladies, tossing their veils in imitation of the wild waves, prostrate before an emphatically motionless, even immovable, ship.

As Lady Macbeth, Miss Leighton's particular kind of nervous vivacity was a good deal more obtrusive than in her other parts. What we were offered had too close a resemblance to a neurotic "bright young thing," for her natural liveliness manifested itself less in the delivery of dramatic poetry than in distracting and at times even melodramatic gestures. By the side of all this, Macbeth appeared even less moved by what he was saying, was even less moving in what he said and did. It cannot be said that Richardson misinterpreted the character, but rather that he simply failed to interpret it—something, after all, came over to the audience, for the Shakespeare of the tragedies is not easily evaded, and Richardson's voice, lacking though it is in variety, is audible enough and powerful within its limits. The witches and apparitions were handled with caution, one is glad to say, and it was only because of Laurence Harvey's inescapable good looks that Malcolm reminded us of Orlando. Jack Gwillim deserves a special word for his noble, stern and moving portrayal of Macduff, and Raymond Westwell was good as Banquo—until, in a caricature of Grand Guignol, he appeared as the Ghost. That this object, looking suspiciously like the village idiot after a fall from a fairly high tree, should have been allowed to sit gibbering in the very forefront of the stage raises a significant point. How can such an obvious piece of atrocious taste be reconciled with that care for tastefulness and elegance in costume and scenery evinced elsewhere? A remarkably well-behaved audience was betrayed into a giggle.

For me, *Volpone* was the great event of the season. Ralph Richardson conveyed so well both the "gentlemanliness" and the humour of the title-role that one might forgive his failure to convince us altogether of his sensuality. The more easily if one had not seen Donald Wolfitt's full-blooded performance. But already in Jonson's play Mosca may be felt to threaten his master's right to feature as its title, and in this production the play's balance of power was clearly disturbed: the "parasite," played with compelling verve by Anthony Quayle, won hands down. One came near to feeling that Volpone, not forcibly enough the *Renaissancemensch*, was the real parasite, living a little ignobly on Mosca's wits. Nevertheless, this was Richardson's most successful role of the season, and his characterisation broke down seriously only in the love-scene, when for an embarrassing moment the initiative seemed to be with the chaste Celia (Siobhan McKenna). The "birds of prey" were well portrayed, except for a rather stuffy and half-hearted Corvino—a pity, this, since the theme of "honour" which Jonson handles so adroitly in connection with this character

lost most of its bite. Excellently grotesque studies came from Rosalind Atkinson (Lady Would-be), Michael Bates (Corbaccio) and Edward Atienza (Nano). But the finest piece of sheer acting (for Mosca is a part which almost plays itself) came from Michael Hordern as Sir Politick Would-be. Sir Politick's peculiar humorousness is a rather scholarly matter, these days, and even at that the sub-plot tends to pall on the printed page. Hordern's portrayal, however, was a revelation to scholarly and unscholarly alike—it deserved a special award. On the whole, then, we can say that the means whereby this very serious comedy plays off seediness against magnificence and punishment against crime were admirably conveyed through costumes, scenery and acting, and the Theatre is to be congratulated on its choice of a non-Shakespearian play.

Returning to Shakespeare, though, what are we to conclude of the 1952 Festival? It raises a number of questions, and some of them carry implications which are more than merely theatrical. Stratford, after all, is a national institution, and an international centre. There is evidence to suggest that we live at a time when good taste and craftsmanship in a rather narrow sense are the chief aims and the chief virtues of our artists. Is it merely logical, then, that we should find ourselves embarrassed by the naked power of the tragedies and even shy of what the comedies offer by way of seriousness? Or is Shakespeare no longer enough for us, and must we import extra attractions that tend, ever so slightly, towards the world of technicolour? Have we completely given up simplicity of staging as a vain archaistic exercise? And is it supposed that a good actor is necessarily a good Shakespearian actor?

Lest these considerations should seem over-earnest, let me quote two comments made by serious-minded visitors from abroad; both had come some distance for the Festival, both were teachers of English literature. The first remark was apropos of *The Tempest*: "The actors reminded me of English publicans. At 10 p.m. exactly, they point to the door and say, 'Now, ladies and gentlemen, please. We want to get home.'" The second remark was provoked by the season as a whole: "But is it true that the English have orange squash in their veins these days?"

Well, perhaps both critics were lacking a little in humour—foreigners have so deep a respect for Shakespeare. Yet it is true that Stratford 1952, developing a theme introduced in last year's production of *The Tempest*, has sought to substitute gracefulness, glamour and good taste for strength, seriousness and Shakespeare.

D. J. ENRIGHT

REVIEWS

THE READER SUSPENDED

Men at Arms, by Evelyn Waugh (Chapman and Hall 15s).

WHAT READER OF THE *Iliad*, if the *Iliad* still has any readers, but has cudgelled his brains before now over the question, How did Homer manage to make it all so interesting? After all, it is the story of a lot of people knocking one another over and killing one another; you would expect it to grow monotonous. And it is not even as if the spotlight of the author's own interest fell upon these subsidiary characters; Achilles, we know, is the hero, and he plays a watching part in the game almost from start to finish. Is it just superbly good writing that does it? Or is it the gift for suggesting, without exploiting, pathos? Or are there certain authors whose instrument thrills, by temperament, to the battle-alarm; soars clear above the dismal pacifist-realist squealing which is our notion, nowadays, of war-literature? At least, Homer confines himself to the foughten field; what if he had devoted his attention to the military training, ten years of it, which preceded the first landing at Troy? What if he had pictured Achilles as jabbing away at a straw dummy, while Antinous in the background walked his horses to keep them fit, and Ajax scored bull's-eyes on a target? Could Homer, even Homer, have got it across?

Yet that is what Mr. Waugh almost miraculously does in *Men at Arms*. True, like the *Iliad*, it ends somewhat inconclusively, and promises us, unlike the *Iliad*, an epic cycle to follow; we are not to be content with an inglorious skirmish at Dakar. For the present he sings of humdrum realities; of billets in seaside lodging-houses, of interminable train journeys, of bickerings in the mess-room; events so boring to live through that you cannot imagine how they will not be boring to read about. But neither the narrative nor the conversation flags for a moment; so transfigured is boredom itself by the magic of Mr. Waugh's realism.

Could he have brought it off, writing in his earlier manner? *Put out more Flags*, his last novel in that kind, was a novel of hostilities without a serious page in it; but it had the home front for its theme, and the home front is easy money for the satirist. Frivolity is a shy visitor to the barrack-square. In any case, *Men at Arms* is not in that earlier manner. Something happened to Mr. Waugh while he was writing *Brideshead Revisited*, and the characters which had begun life as admirably cut cardboard figures turned, as the book went on, into real people. If I may be allowed to talk reviewer's jargon, he had become three-dimensional. *Vile Bodies* or *Scoop* or any of those earlier books

could cheer a rainy afternoon or a dull train journey, but by dint of a privileged unreality. Less fugitive than Saki, less conventionalized than Mr. Wodehouse's stories, they were of a kind which never allowed you to forget that this was a show being put on for your benefit; it was revue, not drama. But in the second half of *Brideshead* you emerged into a new world of imagination, as concrete as the world of Trollope or the world of Maurice Baring—though it owed nothing to either. The mask had dropped, and you saw real people.

With *Helena*, you could not tell; a novel in fancy dress can never give the full illusion of reality. But *Men at Arms* is essentially of the later manner. Not that the incidents touch a serious level; there are points at which Aristophanes rather than Homer would count as Mr. Waugh's predecessor. There is no whiff of theology. Virginia Troy, the hero's ex-wife, is no Lady Julia; she is a mere slut from Metroland. But the ground is as solid under your feet in the mess-room of the Halberdiers as in Barchester close; nor do Guy Crouchback and Dennis Barlow move on the same plane, any more than Godfrey Mellor and Clovis Sangrail.

As a hero, Guy Crouchback is very much the obverse of Charles Ryder in *Brideshead*. Charles Ryder, so sure of himself, so much in the middle of the picture, and yet faintly conscious all the time that he has strayed into a world where he does not quite belong; a world not so much above him as beyond him. Guy Crouchback remains isolated, and to a certain extent handicapped, by belonging to a religion and a culture older and more orderly than anything which lies within the ken of his oddly-assorted mess-mates; yet the army, for him, is an integrating factor in his life (as marriage is for other men, but cannot be for him). And all the time he is content to fall a little into the background, and be a mirror, letting us see the other characters through his eyes. Each of these, as the epic cycle proceeds, will have his *aristeia*, like Diomedes and Agamemnon and Menelaus, leaving the hero to ponder in his tent.

The *aristeia* (if the name be not inappropriate) in this volume is that of Apthorpe. The reader does not take to him; he is a figure of fun, and his very name brings disturbing echoes of *Work Suspended*, of the intolerable Atwater and the good scout he knew called Appleby. Yet he is not, as he might have been in one of those earlier novels, a quick-change actor who can don the mask now of comedy, now of tragedy. He belongs to this real world, in which the most ridiculous of us must be dignified, sooner or later, by the touch of death. Apthorpe's last moments are invested with an almost intolerable pathos by the discovery that his aunt at Peterborough was only an invention. He could so easily have carried that secret to his grave, and we should have been

none the wiser. Yet somehow the unreality of his pedigree makes Apthorpe more real to us than ever.

Brideshead Revisited, *Helena*, either was a masterpiece in its kind. But neither was a triumph easily repeatable; you could not imagine an author going on and on writing books like that. With *Men at Arms*, Mr. Waugh has come out again on to a plateau; less breathtaking than those lonely heights, but with a purer air than the valleys of his youth. And this plateau is full of opportunity and promise; let us hope that we have not seen the last of Brigadier Ritchie-Hook. Even to have attained it, is invigorating; and one reader at least feels constrained to say, in the dated *argot* of Guy Crouchback, "Thanks awfully."

R. A. KNOX

A CLEAN SWEEP

Hemlock and After, by Angus Wilson (Secker and Warburg 12s 6d).

THE REVIEWER WHO comes late to his task, is at great advantage for he joins the debate after the question has been defined. All interested in novels may now be presumed to have read *Hemlock and After* or to have read enough about it to have decided that the book is not for them. The temptation of the late critic is to deal only with his predecessors, the least intelligent of whom were those of the B.B.C. These savants, who discuss books and things on Sunday morning, sought a way out of their puzzlement by saying that the book could be treated "on two levels," as though it comprised two complementary cellophane tracings, ignoring the fact that any book worth discussing at length exists in three dimensions, a solid thing which can be viewed from any angle and cut in any section. Most good novels vary in mood and method—satire, comedy, drama, allegory, analysis, description, comment and criticism, all have their part.

Hemlock and After is a singularly rich, compact and intricate artifact, and the first thing any critic should make clear is that whatever its defects, it is a thing to rejoice over. In England, in any branch of literature from detective stories to theology, we are reading precisely the same writers as we were reading eighteen years ago. Here at last is someone new. Mr. Wilson has already shown himself to be incomparably the cleverest and most skilful story-teller since the brief passage across our skies of Mr. Christopher Isherwood. Now he has produced a novel which in less precise hands might have run to three times its length. Indeed almost the only just complaint that can be made of his craftsmanship, is that it puts a considerable strain on the

reader. Let the mind slacken for the length of a line and you will miss something important.

Thus the plot defies adequate summary. The "Hemlock" of the title is, of course, an allusion to the death of Socrates. The central theme is the tragedy of an elderly man of letters, a liberal-humanist. He desires to crown his life's work by the establishment of a Home for young poets. The test of his prestige is his success or failure in enlisting the support of all the political and scholarly bodies who can make his conception practicable. He triumphs. For the Inauguration Mr. Wilson provides all the traditional comic effects of an English function—the drunk servants, the gate-crashers, the bores and snobs and frauds, the incompetent and insolent workmen. But there is a deep personal tragedy in the personal life of the hero of the day, which causes him to deliver a message of despair instead of one of hope. His wife is out of her mind and he, Mr. Sands, the great man, has in advanced years developed and indulged homosexual tendencies, which have attached him successively to two contrasted youths, a pert young cad and the feeble, retarded victim of a "graciously living" American mother. More than this, there has established herself at his gates (he lives in Metroland) a formidable woman named Mrs. Curry, a procuress, who carries on her trade in a rose-embowered cottage. Almost unanimously the critics have condemned this character as preposterous. The present writer was able, at a pinch, to accept her, but he found her methods of trading quite incredible. It would not be surprising to learn that she had in fact been drawn quite accurately from life. That is often the case with the least plausible characters in fiction and when it happens it marks an artistic failure on the part of the writer. Mrs. Curry's horrible *ménage* forms a caricature of the secret life of Mr. Sands. When she plans a particularly nasty service for one of her neighbours, Mr. Sands is disgusted and determines to intervene. But he has nothing except his disgust. His liberal-humanism has been invoked to justify his own vices. He has silenced his conscience by professing that his interest in his catamites is benevolent. By what standard are he and his set the superiors of Mrs. Curry and hers? He acts, but dies in an agony of mind. It is left to Mrs. Sands, who comes to her senses in the crisis, to complete the work of purgation.

First and last it is the story of "a bad conscience," though the scene is so densely thronged with minor but essential characters, that it needs hard reading to follow it. The characters are "unpleasant" and this is a fact which the reviewers have firmly grasped. The broadcasting critics found the characters so odious as to forfeit all interest. But the case is odder than that. There is a superfluity of the outrageously wicked certainly, but there is almost an equal number of people who under

other eyes than Mr. Wilson's might be quite likeable. Mr. Wilson is unique in his detestation of all of his creatures; their most innocent hobbies are as reprehensible as their vices. The facts that they wear certain clothes or decorate their rooms in certain ways or speak with certain mannerisms are noted as damning evidence—of what?

There seem two prepossessions of Mr. Wilson's which greatly detract from his power as an artist. Perhaps they are Marxist in origin. One is his hypersensitiveness to class. Nowhere, except perhaps in parts of Asia, is the class structure as subtle and elaborate as in England. Everyone in England has a precise and particular place in the social scale and constantly manifests the fact in habit and word. Many writers have found a rich source in this national idiosyncrasy. Few writers have a sharper nose for class than Mr. Wilson. But when he defines he seems to condemn. It is as though he found something obscene in the mere fact of class membership. Can he be troubled by remote dreams of The Classless Society?

The other characteristic may spring from the same indoctrination. He appears to believe that revolution is just around the corner. This apocalyptic sense puts all his creation in a dubious light. If his characters are really the products of economic forces and if those forces are about to cease; if his whole story is simply a flickering shadow on a screen which, any moment, will rise on Real Life; if there are no abiding consequences to anything they do; if there is no heaven or hell for them—then indeed the broadcasters are right in saying that they are devoid of interest or meaning.

But Mr Wilson is too true an artist to be a victim for long of these fatuous views—if indeed he holds them at all. When he is really wholeheartedly engaged with his characters, however obscure, he *knows* they matter, and the reader knows too.

And there is another aspect from which the book can be read. A writer's relation with his symbols is on the whole a private concern. A reader is entitled to find his own allegory. For this reader, at any rate, there was great significance in the return to sanity of Mrs. Sands. It was as though she had been the Conscience of the book, atrophied at first, then stirring and coming to action, and triumphantly and serenely making a great clean sweep. All that is lacking in a work elsewhere so full of fine definition, is the name of the new life-giving power.

EVELYN WAUGH

NOTE:—This review was written some weeks before the publication of Mr. Waugh's *Men at Arms*. His references, therefore, to the B.B.C. critics are not a retaliation for their unenthusiastic treatment of that book. In fact, the group mentioned was an entirely different body.—Editor.

MODERN PAINTERS

Modern English Painters. Sickert to Smith, by Sir John Rothenstein (Eyre and Spottiswoode 25s).

SIR JOHN ROTHENSTEIN is well qualified to write about modern art, not only because he is Director of the Tate Gallery, but because he has known and lived among artists from his childhood. The present volume is the first of his study of modern English painting. In it he refers only incidentally to movements, influences, even to paintings; his aim has been instead to record the personalities and opinions of the seventeen artists he has chosen, as he has known and understood them, in most cases from personal contact. It is a source book rather than a history, and how refreshing it is to find art criticism put on so realistic a basis! We are moving away from the point of view that art transcends time, place, subject, even the artist. We tend instead to be interested in it as reflecting, and conditioned by, the spirit of the age which produces it. With this attitude it is obvious that the secondary evidence which we need—and some outside evidence it seems we do need very badly to enable us to understand our own art—is that which tells us about the circumstances of painters' lives, what sort of people they were, and how they reacted to the world about them.

The author has chosen, as he says arbitrarily, to begin in 1900. He has however used another criterion, which since he is deliberately choosing to illuminate the chaotic course of modern art by isolating personalities, is perhaps more logical. The artists he has chosen for this volume were all born between 1860 and 1880. On this basis his selection is inclusive. The only artist of wide reputation who has been omitted is Brangwyn. The period he deals with resolves itself predominantly into that between 1900 and 1914; only two of these artists, Frances Hodgkins and Matthew Smith, had not yet arrived at their mature style before the First World War. The predominating atmosphere is that of the Slade School, the New English Art Club and Camden Town, with Roger Fry as a sinister figure lurking in the background. The formative influences are overwhelmingly French, with Whistler and the Impressionists as a starting point and the Post-Impressionist Exhibitions of 1910 and 1912 as revolutionary revelations. The great personality who appears again and again as one reads through these lives is Sickert.

Sir John Rothenstein claims that this is a generation which is undervalued, that the English school shows no less excellence than the French, and considerably more interest. Does he prove his case? I must admit at once that it is a period which I find unsympathetic.

It seems to me odd to begin a study of modern painting with these artists, of whom two only are now alive, whose problems are not our problems. But the author presents the evidence from which everyone can judge for himself, and he has moreover provided admirable illustrations to his writing in the galleries of the Tate where one may see displayed together a high proportion of the work which he discusses. When I went there one could also see the exhibition of the twentieth century masterpieces chosen by American art critics. It was an extraordinary contrast. One felt as if one had stepped from a world of sensitively and subtly understood appearances and responses, of London streets and common people and sea shores, right into the mind of man, its groping, its fears, its attenuated knowledge, laid bare instead of transmitted through the familiar medium of visual things.

By what criterion can one judge? Surely the only place to begin is where the artist begins, if one can find that out, and try to see how far he succeeds in doing what he sets out to do. This book is full of illuminating quotations from artists' writings and conversations: Sickert's "serious painting is illustration," "the plastic arts are gross arts, dealing joyfully with gross material facts"; Steer's idea of himself "muddling about with paints." "The painting of an old mackintosh (I don't pretend to explain how) very carefully and *realistically* wrought may be much more spiritual than an abstract landscape" (Tonks). "I was possessed with the faith that if I concerned myself wholly with appearance, something of the mystery of life might creep into my work" (William Rothenstein). "Each age has its atmosphere, its cities, its people. Realism, loving Life, loving its Age, interprets its epoch by extracting from it the very essence of all it contains of great or weak, of beautiful or of sordid, according to the individual temperament" (Ginner).

The aims were various, and shifting too in a world where the painter was already exposed to an unprecedented availability of ideas, both past and present, without the shelter of living tradition. The author is right, I think, in his stress on the need for the twentieth century to think and go on thinking, and in his criticism of Steer and Orpen for their intellectual laziness. His criticism of Steer's work of the eighties and nineties, and the rating of this as his best is interesting and convincing comment. But is it not only Steer and Orpen among these painters who fail to stay the course of a lifetime? He writes of Sickert's work as definitely declining after 1914; of the failure of James Pryde to realize his vision. To Augustus John he is kinder, but the record is there, his best drawings done in his student days, his great compositions unfinished. That he is gifted far beyond his contem-

poraries is undoubted, but where are the masterpieces? Is it an accident that it is only the little artists—above all Gwen John—who really seem to have found themselves?

Sir John Rothenstein gives us an interesting general introduction, but it is outside his purpose to attempt to explain the artists he deals with in relation to the deeper movements of life and thought in England or abroad, and it is here, I feel, where the explanation lies of the failure of these artists to develop, and of their relation to continental work.

NICOLETE GRAY

COMPROMISE WITH EVIL

Memoirs, by Franz von Papen. Translated by Brian Connell (Andre Deutsch 25s).

FRANZ VON PAPEN has played a role in the affairs of his country and the world since 1913, when he went as Military Attaché to the German Embassy in Washington, until his acquittal by the War Crimes Court at Nuremberg in 1946. In spite of this his memoirs contribute little to the history of the period, and cast no fresh light on the events of the time. Nor do they give a picture of the life and reactions of the German people during the crucial period between the First and Second World Wars. Von Papen is so concerned with self-justification that he has little time for these other matters. It is as a personal study (so well translated that the book might well have been written originally in English) that it is worth reading—helping us to understand how a German who, in his own words, was “a convinced monarchist,” “of conservative inclination,” “a supporter of true social reform,” “an outspoken protagonist of Franco-German *rapprochement*,” and “an ardent Catholic,” came to serve and help the Nazi régime from the time of Hitler’s first rise to power until his final collapse.

Even when one has read the 600 pages of memoirs it is hard to come to any firm conclusion about the man. Was he a fool, incapable of seeing the results of his actions and with no right, therefore, to occupy the position of a responsible politician? Was he a knave, a crypto-Nazi without the courage to join the Party? Was he a careerist, intent only upon preserving for himself an important place in public affairs? Was he a patriot who supported what he considered the only government capable of restoring his country to its rightful place in the world? Whatever his motives, he compromised with evil and if he hoped good would come of it he has had his own disillusionment.

As we follow von Papen from Berlin to Washington, to the Western and Turkish fronts, to home politics, Vienna and Ankara, we find a

character that is weak, disloyal, and at times incapable of thinking straight. The weakness is shown when Schleicher offered him the Chancellorship: he gave much thought to it and asked the advice of friends, and then wrote "my mind was made up. Early on Monday morning . . . I set off for Schleicher's office again with the full intention of declining his offer." Yet he became Chancellor. Again, after the Dollfuss murder, when he was offered the Vienna mission, he writes of Hitler "he could hardly expect me to take up another post in the service of his Government. . . . In the end I agreed." And so with Turkey. He shows his disloyalty as an officer on the staff of Falkenhayn during the First World War, when he has no shame in relating that he sent a telegram behind his chief's back to the German Ambassador in Constantinople, and to the German High Command in order to get a major decision of his General reversed; and loyalty to his own political Party did not prevent him accepting the Chancellorship as a successor to his Party's chief, Dr. Brüning, and against the Party's wishes. His inability to think clearly, at least when his own actions were affected, appears when his disloyalty to Falkenhayn was repeated the other way round by a subordinate in the Vienna Legation, his Councillor von Stein, who sent independent reports to the German Foreign Office, and he refers bitterly to "this intrigue." Although as a refrain throughout the book it is his conviction that Germany must have a government "based on Christian principles" he apparently sees nothing inconsistent in writing, during his time in Vienna, "the difficulties were tremendous, and sometimes I had to adapt my reports and criticisms to the prevailing psychological situation"; or in referring to the Dollfuss murder as "something worse than a crime—a really appalling piece of political stupidity." Nor does he see any contradiction in writing on one page "when Hitler turned round to speak to me, his voice seemed choked with sobs. 'What an immense task we have set ourselves, Herr von Papen—we must never part until our work is accomplished.' I was happy to agree." And on the next page, speaking of his aim as Hitler's Vice Chancellor, "The task was to organize an opposition group without making this immediately evident."

It is impossible to feel warmth or sympathy for a man who writes like this and it is only too easy to look at him as a typical German. If this is what he were there would indeed be little hope for any peaceful collaboration with Germany. But fortunately there are others—to mention only two, both of whom are referred to by von Papen, Schlange Schoeningen, who was a Minister in the Brüning administration and who has written his recollections of the pre-war period, and von Hassell, Ambassador in Rome, who lost his life for the July plot,

but who has left us his Memoirs. These are both men with the same type of background and upbringing as von Papen, both conservative by tradition and international in outlook, and no less conscious of their country's role; yet how different have been their lives. So long as there are men like von Papen in Germany we must retain a healthy scepticism about Germany's political behaviour; so long as there are men like von Hassell and Schlange Schoeningen, we are justified in tempering our scepticism with optimism.

H. D. WALSTON

THE PROPHET ACTON

Essays on Church and State, by Lord Acton. With an Introduction by Douglas Woodruff (Hollis and Carter 30s).

THIS VOLUME is announced as "the first of a collected edition of Lord Acton's writings." It consists of six complete essays from the *Rambler* (with parts of two articles on "Bossuet"), four articles from the *Home and Foreign Review*, a dozen short pieces from these and later periodicals, and fifty pages of snippets. The only clue to any principle of selection appears in a phrase from the Introduction, that Acton's "relevance for the twentieth century comes from his prophetic preoccupation with the very questions with which the twentieth century has found itself preoccupied." From this point of view, it is hard to see the "relevance" of the trivial article on the *Matinées Royales*, or of the rather superficial review of Döllinger's *Papstfabeln*: the equivalent space might more usefully have been given to "Milner and his Times," for example, and "Conflicts with Rome." Still, as it is not easy to come by Acton's *Rambler* or the *H. & F.*, one must be grateful for so much as has now been reprinted (misprints and all; with two or three dozen new ones for good measure, of which "King" for "Pope," "international" for "internal," and "government" for "society" are specimens): though this cannot convey any adequate impression of the astonishing power, range, and brilliance of the *H. & F.*; in which respects this Review may plausibly be held to have excelled all other periodicals ever published. That was Acton's achievement—Acton's, and Simpson's of course: but Simpson's collaboration was itself an achievement, for which Acton was as grateful as he might be proud. It is in the *H. & F.* as a whole, rather than in Acton's own contributions to it, that appears the vindication of his claim for the Church—"not only the enemy of falsehood, but indirectly, though necessarily, the promoter of all knowledge"; and the type of his ideal Ultramontane, "answering the critic by a severer criticism, the metaphysician by closer reasoning, the historian by deeper learning, the politician by sounder politics and indifference itself by a purer impartiality."

Edmund Bishop in later life doubted whether he would ever have become a Catholic, "if it had not been for the *H. & F.*"; and this despite the manner of its end, for "the principles have not ceased to be true, nor the authority to be legitimate, because the two are in contradiction."

It may be of interest to examine one case of Acton's "prophetic preoccupation" with questions of the present moment, in the remarkable essay on the historical background of the War between the States (written early in 1861, and therefore confusingly entitled "The Causes of the American Revolution"). The analysis shows how the deliberate constitutional checks on the Federal government were whittled or washed away in the first half of the century, "democracy" (the unfettered sovereignty of a popular majority) finding its instrument in the central power. Even the almost violent exercise of State Rights in the South against protective tariffs failed to halt this development, which was, on the contrary, accelerated by the accumulation of gold at the centre through the duties themselves. In these circumstances there arose the Republican party—"not only revolutionary, but aggressive; . . . not only for absolutism but for annexation." The party adopted the policy of abolitionism; and as soon as it secured power, this policy—the will of the sovereign people—was to be enforced throughout the Union, regardless of constitutional objection, and ruthlessly. "Constitutional government, that is, the authority of law as distinguished from interest, can exist only under a King. . . . But the tyranny of republics is greatest when differences of races are combined with distinctions of class." "The secession of the Southern States . . . is chiefly important in a political light as a protest and reaction against revolutionary doctrines, and as a move in the opposite direction to that which prevails in Europe."

Eighty-nine years later, in another Union where "differences of races are combined with distinctions of class," a party has obtained power through a white majority. This party has Republican aspirations. Throughout a half-century, constitutional limitations upon the power of the Union Government have been progressively removed, with more or less violent opposition. The party in power is committed to a peculiar racial policy, at best no more commendable to sound reason or to true religion than the policy of "abolition" was. The government has shewn its impatient intolerance of all constitutional obstacles that stand in the way of enforcing that policy immediately and without compromise throughout the Union; and this in the name of the will of the sovereign people. As yet there has been no secession, and no civil war: but the parallels even with the language used in America, before the War between the States, are striking—"I do not

see," said Emerson, "how a barbarous community and a civilized community can constitute one State."

What are we to make of this? In the first place, it is salutary to be rid, if only for a moment, of the unscientific prejudices which commonly obscure our vision of political realities: to be free to see Johnny Reb as a martyr of constitutional principles, and Dr. Malan as an embodiment of the divine right of popular majorities. Secondly, it is comfortable to reflect, for once, that a vague instinctive sympathy for Dixie and an equally formless repugnance for *apartheid* are not only reconcilable, but belong to a rigorously consistent intellectual system. Thirdly, in this quater-centenary year of Edward Coke's birth, it is decent to attend, in passing, to what a journalist has called "the survival as a political force of the notion of fundamental law . . . the notion that there are things which no Parliament can do without violating the essence of the constitution and removing certain tacit conditions of the subject's duty to obey."

Yet, if anyone should say that, if history puts the New Englanders and the Afrikans on one side of the argument, with the Torch Commando and the K.K.K. on the other, then Mr. Henry Ford's view of history was right—it might be difficult to answer.

N. J. ABERCROMBIE

A CATHOLIC CULTURAL HISTORY

The Meaning of Civilization, by Bohdan Chudoba (New York: Kenedy, \$4).

A CULTURAL HISTORY of Europe in short compass, written from a Catholic standpoint, is always welcome. There are too few of them. But this one in particular has the added merit of confirming the reputation for high scholarship and graphic description which its young author had already established by his earlier books.

He is one of the most brilliant of the generation of younger scholars whom the totalitarian régimes of Eastern Europe—first the Nazis and then the Marxists—drive westward to pursue their studies in exile in London or Washington or (in Dr. Chudoba's case) both. He holds doctorates of Prague and Madrid; he moves with ease in half a dozen languages; he was in the Czech Resistance Movement during the German occupation; he was a delegate to the Peace Conference in Paris in 1946; he was Editor of the Czech Catholic periodical that most compares with *The Tablet*; in the last Czech Parliament before the Marxist *coup* of 1948 he was a deputy; but then he escaped from his country on skis, with a price on his head, and crossed the Atlantic to start a new life. He is now a professor at Iona College in New York State.

Till now, most of his writings had been for the enlightenment of his own people—translations into Czech of Catholic literary and philosophical and historical classics from elsewhere. This new book returns the compliment: it is an exposition of the Catholic heritage of civilization in Europe intended for the encouragement of Catholics in the West, at the hands of one who has seen his own part of the world lose that heritage for some unpredictable time. Of the ultimate spiritual battle he says that "it is perhaps more necessary to fight it in countries where it has not yet taken root, those which have already experienced its despair and misery. . . . The ultimate victory of Christ cannot be doubted by a Christian. But the temporal annihilation of values which we have witnessed during the recent years does not leave one untouched who loves a value because he knows that, in history, it is unique."

Accordingly, since he is writing for ordinary readers, he has given us a book redolent of the learning and contemplation that had filled the years behind it, yet simple and summary and direct. The hands of the masters who have formed his mind—Dawson and Maritain and the Popes of the modern Encyclicals—are visible the whole time. The quality of his mind shows outstandingly, perhaps, when he is sketching in the contribution and at times the aberrations of the modern applied sciences, and of pure physics and biology, with citations from the leading works.

The "Creative Activity of Man," the subject of Part One of the book, is handled in such a way as to bring out first the positive essence of the Christian view of history and then the fallacies in the idea of Progress which is threatening to supersede it in the West still. In Part Two he surveys the history of the West in five periods, divided at conventional points of time and concentrating on bringing out the special characteristics of the successive ages, of Feudalism and Industrialism, etc., which have a sound survival-value if accommodated to the foreground of modern conditions. In Part Three, "Aspects of Christian Culture," he gives us a brilliant cameo of the Catholic position in its contemporary setting: in the arts, in higher education, in the natural sciences, in legal traditions, and in international theory. The "impassioned" note, of which he warns the reader at the outset, is to be detected in his final chapter, which he calls "Hope and Despair in Modern Society." But by then we were expecting it, and it crowns an exposition such as his in certainly a fitting way.

Of his manner of handling a difficult theme two examples must suffice:

Love is the only reason for any real progress. And it is also its only purpose. . . . All other motives can find their fulfilment in

time and space. Love exceeds their frontiers. . . . And because the progress which originates from love makes man more free from matter, it is also the source of true liberty. When acting according to his instincts, man acts as a prisoner. When he acts from love, he is free. And only because he is free, he lives in history. An act of love is a decision of will in favour of liberty.

If there is no regularity in history, there certainly is a meaning of history and, consequently, a reason for everything which history has created or will create. . . . An inheritance which is not constantly related to the basic concepts of philosophy may be lost at any moment. . . . The conservatism of a Burke and the expectations of a Marx are equally dangerous because both believe in a moment of time in which man is or would be secure. The freedom of man, however, is in his insecurity, and in his consciousness of this insecurity. . . . Nature itself cannot give peace to mankind. Nor can peace result from any tradition no matter how old, if such tradition is not anchored in God, in His revealed truth. And the truth of God of course requires the assent of man.

A. C. F. BEALES

FIFTY FAUSTS

The Fortunes of Faust, by E. M. Butler (Cambridge University Press 30s).

THERE ARE LEGENDS—Helen of Troy, for instance—whose inherent beauty emerges even in the interpretations of the untalented, and there are other legends, and Faust is one of them, which can only be redeemed from banality by genius. The theme is commonplace, for no day passes without some man selling his soul to the devil, but of this theme Goethe made a thing of imperishable beauty, just as Beethoven transformed the simple melody of the Alp horn which he heard on the Rigi into the *Pastoral* symphony.

This volume, the third of the trilogy in which Miss Butler investigates the Faust legend, is devoted to a study of Faust in literature. She examines in succession some fifty "Fausts." If it were not for Marlowe and Goethe the Faust theme would have little interest excepting for specialists. Even Heine, great poet though he was, was defeated by Faust. And it is not the theme itself but the poet's vision of beauty which inspired the loveliest lines in Marlowe and in Goethe, as, for instance, Marlowe's

Have not I made blind Homer sing to me
Of Alexander's love and Oenon's death?
And hath not he, that built the wall of Thebes,
With ravishing sound of his melodious harp
Made music with my Mephistopheles?

I wish that Miss Butler had not concentrated so exclusively on the historical background and the incidental associations of Goethe's Faust, and had shown by suitable quotations the lyric beauty of this masterpiece at its most inspired moments. And I am sorry that she never gives the original of any of her German quotations. Shelley's translation of the Faustian *Prologue in Heaven* would deserve inclusion in any anthology of the hundred best translations perhaps along with the same poet's rendering of Plato's

'Αστήρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμπες
ἐνὶ ζωοῖσιν Ἐῶος.

But was this a translation? Did Shelley know German? Or was he relying on Monk Lewis's oral translation? Nobody in the Alpine village in which I am writing could, I suspect, answer that question; but it is only one of the many examples of the entertaining hares which this book tempts me to follow.

I wish that Miss Butler had given us her views on Spengler's use of the word "Faustian" to describe the type of man produced by our Graeco-Roman-Christian civilization.

In her final chapter Miss Butler discusses Thomas Mann's recent treatment of the Faustus legend. Mann illustrates a modern version of the Faustian theme for he has made a pact with Satan, disguised as a modern progressive, the Prince of Secularism, and like other victims of Hitler he has forgotten Christ's warning that one cannot cast out Beelzebub with devils. Indeed, the melancholy plight of modern Europe is a sad commentary on that same Faustian legend; Mr. Roosevelt at Yalta playing the role of an unconscious Faust.

It would be impertinent to praise Miss Butler's scholarship, but it is strictly pertinent to insist that her book illustrates the point which I have already made, the importance of treatment. Even those who are not interested in the Faust legend will be fascinated by the incidental information with which Miss Butler enlivens her narrative. Her prose is accomplished and, from time to time, flavoured with a touch of astringent irony.

ARNOLD LUNN

HISTORY OF WITCHCRAFT

Witchcraft, by Pennethorne Hughes (Longmans 21s).

THIS BOOK WITNESSES to man's recurrent wish at least to hear about the supernatural even if he does not believe in it. The first part, about the survival of vegetable, or animal, cults has long been known to students; and while it is true that "it would be ridiculous to pretend that medieval witchcraft descended directly from classical

witchcraft," Mr. Hughes's description of early Christianity is a throw-back to Renan, if not to J. M. Robertson (if anyone now remembers him). Christians did not at first meet in "group units" of thirteen: the "horns" of the Apocalyptic Lamb had their own symbolic tradition but nothing to do with a fertility-cult: the thesis that Mithraism influenced Christianity is antiquated; the expression "renatus in aeternum" (sometimes used after the bath of bull's blood) was due rather to Christianity than vice versa: the Christmas date, December 25, had no connexion with Mithraism as such. Nor is there any evidence that St. Paul in any way transformed Christianity, still less that he introduced into the Church the language, to say nothing of the ideas, of Hellenic-Asiatic mystery-cults, which he hated, so far as he knew them. We can wash out allusions to "psychological misfits" inhabiting the Thebaid, and paragraphs about "masochistic and ulcered pervers." That is not history, while the humorous and common-sense Lausiac History is. Mr. Hughes's account of medieval morality is quite Coultonian: what really strikes one, if one reads carefully, is that sanctity, or the desire for it, is not merely a reaction but a continuous stream, though it flowed more strongly at certain times, e.g. in the thirteenth century, or, indeed, the Renaissance; and a book like Bremond's *Histoire Littéraire* suffices to show the enormous substratum of quiet yet normal goodness that underlay the wickedness which is always the more advertised. We think, too, he might have kept more clear the distinction between merry-making—relatively innocent, though more exciting when secret: witchcraft—not always malevolent, but supplying the witch with a sense of special power: magic, which should mean the attempt to achieve superhuman results without the help of, or even in defiance of, divine powers: and a downright anti-God cult. When judging of what is possible in the line of abnormalities, he might read the late Fr. Thurston's *Physical Phenomena of Mysticism*: he might then rely less on Miss M. Murray's *Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (1921), whose real yet often misapplied erudition reminds us at times of Miss Jane Ellen Harrison. Nor should the late Montague Summers be quoted. It is doubtful if he ever was really a Catholic, let alone "priested": his power of suggestion was great and, I have reason to know, disastrous: his erudition was bogus. Mr. Hughes has certainly accumulated a number of statements, but he could have left out much that he recognizes as *bad* evidence, or hypothesis, nor have troubled to tell us that someone has apocryphally derived the bishop's mitre from the fish-head of Dagon's priests. But he is too obsessed with phallism, and should know that obelisks have nothing to do with Druid groves or the Cross. Still, he makes serious efforts to differentiate mentalities: he sees how witch-hunting

was not only far more widespread in the Protestant world than in the Catholic, but a different thing in itself. He tries to do real justice to, e.g., the Inquisitors, yet too often allows himself a sneer at what he does not like, and uses one unforgivable expression about the "Groups." He thinks witchcraft will not revive unless an authoritarian system gains control of Europe and the World. Then the "secret doctrine" would hide away and reproduce old "forms"—only "the witches would this time be Christian." May we refer the author to *Études Carmélitaines: Magie des Extrêmes* (1952), especially G. Buraud's chapter: *Le Magies de l'esotérisme nouveau*?

C. C. MARTINDALE

SHORTER NOTICES

Enciclopedia Cattolica, Vol. VI, Genni-Inna; Vol. VII, Inno-Mapp; Vol. VIII, Mara-Nz (G. C. Sansoni, Via Gino Capponi 26, Florence. Eleven volumes, £72 10s, plus £5 postage).

THE MONTH HAS ALREADY PRAISED the universal qualities of this tremendous enterprise: it is almost invidious to single out this or that article for commendation. The illustrations are always admirable, e.g. those illustrating "Georgia." The articles themselves are full and balanced—to mention three where there is room for much dispute: on Jeremias; Gerson; SS. John and Paul. The pages on Jesus Christ attempt, in reality, an impossible task, but the iconography is singularly rich. Other articles deal with Jansenism, Japan, St. George, Judaism: we are pleased to find an appreciative paragraph on Archbishop Goodier; and the section about English literature carries us right down to Graham Greene, "perhaps the strongest of contemporary English novelists, an inexorable explorer of the conflicts of consciences and minds." But we find the photography disappointing, e.g., no Westminster Cathedral! The seventh volume contains a very substantial article on the Interpretation of Scripture: it seems definitely acknowledged that nothing is known of the circumstances in which the Cross was found: there is a long sympathetic article on Islam; and one on Italy is well balanced, as, in fact, all the contributions are. We are delighted that the portrait of Blessed Anne-Marie Javouhey is taken from the vigorous bust now in Paris, and not from the insipid picture mostly current. Jugo-Slavia provided plenty of thin ice, and so did the Kulturkampf, and Lacordaire, not to dwell on Lamennais, but it seems nowhere to have cracked. The story of the Holy House of Loreto is told almost without comment, and indeed speaks for itself. The topic of Magic is, we think, too summarily dealt with. In the

third of these volumes an article of supreme importance is, of course, that upon Maria; it is superbly illustrated. The Martyrology is exactly discussed (and the whole topic of martyrdom—even, a gleam of humour illuminates the account of the "cephalophori" Saints, who, decapitated, carried their heads in their hands). Mass and Messianism are fully treated; also Missions (a very relentless photograph shows a nun acting as dentist). There are courageous pages on modern religious art: we see, too, the quite astounding progress made in reconstructing Monte Cassino. The article on Newman is excellent: all points of view are taken into account. But, we repeat, it is idle to single out an article here or there: that the Vatican Press should have produced these monumental volumes in such hard times is almost a miracle.

The New Testament: A New Translation in Plain English, by C. K. Williams (S.P.C.K. and Longmans 8s 6d).

WE CAN SINCERELY WELCOME this translation, which is the best modern one we know. It is not true to say that with the decay of Bible reading there are no more "consecrated phrases": if they have been forgotten, they should be relearnt for they never could be bettered. We regret that some of these are modified; yet the author has no mannerisms of his own. Of course no one could make certain passages "sympathetic" to modern ears, simply because they express a Hebrew way of thinking (e.g. the allegory in Galatians about Sara and Hagar). Here and there we think he misses the point; we are glad that he gets rid of *Raca* in St. Matthew, v. 22, but "Curse you" is no substitute: the point throughout this passage is that external wrong-doing meets with external punishment, but Christ teaches that even the interior evil thought must not be entertained—it will be judged by God (here the outward insult—*Raca* itself means "fool!"—is contrasted with interior contempt and its lasting condemnation). We do not think he need feel that "spear" instead of "hyssop" in John xix. 29 is merely a "guess": we think the emendation *hussoperithentes* for *hussopoperithentes* is almost indisputable: the rare word *hussos* was in fact a short spear, whereas "hyssop" makes no sense at all. We should be glad if this version became popular. Mr. Williams was Vice-Principal in the Wesley College, Madras, and is now assistant Vice-Principal in the native African College of Achimota.

The Everyday Catholic, by Martin Harrison, O.P. (Blackfriars Publications 18s 6d).

FATHER HILARY CARPENTER, in his preface, seems to think that St. Thomas was right in believing that his *Summa* was milk for babes—that it "tended to the instruction of beginners." St. John

of the Cross, too, thought that his *Ascent* was suited to beginners. So terribly difficult it is for a commanding intelligence to grasp that what is clear to it can *not* be to lesser minds. But Fr. Harrison goes a very long way to making deep things clear to simple people, without turning depth into shallowness. His style is itself simple, though never undignified. He does not shirk tremendous topics like the Blessed Trinity, the Mystical Body (and its sacrifice), nor humbler topics like Prayer and its difficulty (his dealing with "distractions" is excellent: how tired a confessor may be of the formula "sometimes having distractions in prayer"! He deals also with the very important subject of perseverance, specially important in view of so many who find, maybe in middle life, that both faith and love seem to be fading out. We might wish that when writing of the Sacred Heart he had explained more fully the personal yet quite subordinate part played by St. Margaret Mary in the development of that devotion. But no one can say everything in one chapter, and Fr. Harrison is not teaching a history lesson but getting down to the essence of a devotion. The serious-minded laity, but perhaps especially givers of conferences or the like, will be grateful for this book, so friendly though never mawkish, so varied in its illustrations (we don't remember anyone using, with such effect, a gipsy saying!) yet never trivial.

The Writer and the Absolute, by Wyndham Lewis (Methuen 21s).

IN THIS BOOK Mr. Wyndham Lewis returns to one of his earliest preoccupations, the relationship between the author and politics. This time, however, it is in chastened mood, with little hope of discovering what he once termed "the party of genius." Far now from those palmary days when a government by the *élite* seemed (on paper) to offer the artist a kind of protective cover from the masses, he has finally come to accept that only artists are particularly prone to defend or care for the freedom of art. This position represents one step further than Mr. Herbert Read advocated in his war-time *Politics of the Unpolitical*—an anarchism that looks for no assistance even from the Anarchist Federation.

Mr. Wyndham Lewis is particularly concerned with the political pressure-groups operative in contemporary French writing. According to him the serious Gallic author is compelled to toe the party-line not only in his civic opinions but also in his imaginary fabrications. This is like saying that an English Left-Wing writer must present a Fabian or Labour-Party novel. Apparently the Independent is a species rare to French high-brow fiction.

This possibly exaggerated account of affairs, Mr. Wyndham Lewis illustrates by chapters on Sartre and the late George Orwell, in which

he shows how the latter was able in his last works, the play *Animal Farm* and the novel *1984*, to make an all-but near-clean-break with the fashionable "pink" formulas that once enslaved him.

The analysis Mr. Wyndham Lewis conducts of the infiltration of ideologies into the province of literature is clearly the best part of the book. It is in the remedy proposed, namely that all authors should look upon the so-called republic of letters as "a kind of Switzerland," a grand neutral zone of thought, that an almost hopeless note is manifested. One feels that Mr. Wyndham Lewis hardly trusts his own panacea.

DEREK STANFORD

The Tudor Books of Private Devotion, by Helen C. White (The University of Wisconsin Press \$4.75).

THE PRAYER-BOOKS in use in sixteenth-century England, especially of course the various versions of *The Primer*, deserve more study than they have received. Dr. Helen White has already established her competence in the field by her *English Devotional Literature, 1600-1640*, and her latest work also is distinguished by erudition, thoroughness and sympathy. Among its values for the general reader is as a warning against an over-simplified view of the English Reformation, from either side. There is a chapter on *The Primer* as an instrument of religious change, and that theme recurs continually; but the fact that the *O bone Iesu* of St. Bernardine of Siena "held its own through all the changes of the sixteenth century" is representative of much more of the same sort. And if there was much in the "old wretche of Syon," Richard Whytford's, *Werke for Housholders* that his Puritan successors would approve, so also the Catholic of today can appreciate "the wide-ranging scriptural and liturgical allusiveness, the logical and emotional integrity" of the prayers and other writings of John Bradford, who went to the stake under Queen Mary.

It would not be easy to do justice to the manifold interest of this book: such matters, for example, as the rewriting of Father Robert Persons's *Booke of Christian Exercise, appertaining to Resolution* (originally the work of Father Caspar Loarte, S.J.) by an Anglican clergyman, Edmund Bunny, the success of the result—engagingly known as *Bunny's Resolution*—among Protestants, and its deep influence on Richard Baxter. It is surprising, however, that Dr. White seems to think that *Jesu's Psalter* (surely that is the right form of the title?) was not current after the seventeenth century (page 145); though admittedly its later versions are generally rather debased from the original.

D. A.

Round and about Spain, by A. F. Tschiffely (Hodder and Stoughton 20s).

THERE HAS BEEN A SPATE of books about Spain recently but few have managed to convey the unique quality of this country as well as this work by the author of *Tschiffely's Ride*. This writer, who knows Latin America so intimately, approached Spain with two advantages: he could speak Spanish and he had a knowledge of Spanish history. Furthermore, Mr. Tschiffely chose to travel about the peninsula on a motor-cycle, and thus was able to visit little-known and out-of-the-way towns and villages. Consequently this is one of the best books to be published about Spain and the Spanish people during recent years, and one to be recommended to anyone contemplating a first visit to this extraordinary land, about which it has been said: "If Spain didn't exist, someone would have to invent it."

Much has been written about the beauties of southern Spain, and of the architectural splendours of Salamanca, Toledo, and of the Escorial. But few modern English writers have attempted to analyse and describe the Spanish character, and this is where Mr. Tschiffely succeeds triumphantly. He has a fortunate way of being able to evoke a scene or a group of people very vividly, and all through the book he dwells upon the unbounded hospitality of the Spanish people and on their natural friendliness. Like other travellers, he was impressed by the innate nobility of the Spaniard, and he recounts a number of incidents that convey his Christian way of life. For it must be said that Spain, today, is probably one of the few really practising Christian countries in Western Europe. The book is charmingly illustrated with a number of the author's drawings.

Retreat Notes, by Fr. Joseph Keating, S.J., compiled and edited by Fr. Philip Caraman, S.J. (Gill, Dublin 6s).

"BUT THE PRESENT FEELING OF INDEPENDENCE, the seeming remoteness of the Object of our devotion . . . make duty a dry and abstract thing," wrote Fr. Keating, "until Spirit touches spirit and love is engendered." It was not a sentence of speculative asceticism: in these brief notes of his personal retreats one can see something of how Fr. Keating girded his mind and will in the divine service and may glimpse the engendering of his love of God. They are personal notes: they display therefore no academic knowledge of the *Exercises*, no particularly deep understanding of the text or structure, no striking originality. But they are wise and lit with the shrewdness of his keen perception, instinct with immense sincerity, great generosity. They give us the traditional devotion of the *Exercises*, in the best sense of the words, soberly and solidly meditated by a priest who found there the real principles of his life.

ONE of the great occupational risks of business life under the pressure of to-day is that the practical man of affairs neglects his outside reading, and all too easily falls into a narrow circle of immediate preoccupations. There is always loss in this, and the Catholic business or professional man, as a member of the Church Universal, has a particularly strong reason for keeping his mind open to wider horizons. Certainly it was never more necessary than now to follow world happenings. A direct chain of causes and effects ties every business to economical changes in the world, which are themselves as often the consequence as the cause of changes in men's political and social ideas. These ideas in their turn come out of the religions, or irreligions, of contemporary man.

In many countries the Catholic Church is at the heart of the battle of ideas. Cardinal Manning's saying that "all great quarrels between men are at bottom theological" suggests that there is, in fact, no better starting-point or background for understanding the modern world than a Catholic one. Because of this approach and background,

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